



PHD

An investigation into how white working class students break the trend of underachievement and accomplish academic success

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An investigation into how white working class students break the trend of
underachievement and accomplish academic success

Volume 1 of 1

Gillian Frances Barrett

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of Education

May 2017

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Signed on behalf of the Faculty/School of Education

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Abstract

There is a well-documented history of the relationship between poverty and educational underachievement. However, there is limited discussion of the educational achievement of white working class students from deprived backgrounds. The research seeks explanations for why some white working class students in the UK succeed at school. By finding plausible explanations some of the factors behind their success may be applied to improve schooling practices for this group.

The research, adopts a longitudinal methodology in following a cohort of students in a 'failing' school, situated on a council estate in the West of England with high levels of social poverty. Two groups of students are examined, the very top performers in the school and those just above average. Student-led peer interviews, parent interviews, and the use of educational and social data inform the study.

The role of cultural capital plays a significant part in the totality of success of the students. The student's place within the family and its stability, their access to literacy development within the home, and their cultural development in the wider world, together with 'critical moments' provide the key performers that have shaped the capital of these students and was translated into a more aspirational outlook on life.

Chapter 1: Introduction and aims of the research.

“Poverty can never be used as an excuse but the stark fact is that it is the reason for low achievement among many white working class young people.”

(Christine Blower, Acting General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, 2008)

The close relationship between educational attainment and levels of poverty has been well documented. (Blanden, and Machin, 2008; Cassen and Kingdon, 2007; DfES, 2004; Dunne, Mairead and Gazeley, 2008; Smyth and Wrigley, 2013; and Marshall, 2013). Evidence shows that there are inequalities in academic achievement between the social classes. The 2007 national GCSE examination results for the UK (5 A*-C including English and mathematics) showed an attainment gap of 43.1% difference between the most deprived and least deprived students (68.4% to 25.3%). White British students eligible for Free School Meals were the lowest attaining group with only 17% achieving 5 A*-C grades (including English and mathematics); the average for the UK was 45%. Lupton (2006) showed that only one fifth of ‘deprived schools’ gained 5 A*-C grades, and Demach, Drew, and Grimsley (1998) stated that socio-economic differences in attainment are larger than gender and ethnic differences and that this has changed little over time; 70% of students with parents in professional occupations gained 5 A*-C in 1993, compared to only 14% of students with parents in unskilled manual occupations. Trevor Phillips, the Chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, expressed this inequality: *“The colour of disadvantage isn’t black or brown its white”* (Ford, 2000, ‘Equality Watchdog Trevor Phillips’ Page 1). Quinn, Thomas, Slack, Casey, Thoxton and Noble (2006) recognised that there was inequality between men and women in academic attainment but showed that white working class males were still most disadvantaged. McGiveny (2004) acknowledged that attainment levels had risen for both sexes and maintained that the greatest divide in education was in social class rather than gender.

The Ofsted report (2013) ‘Unseen Children: access and achievement 20 years on’, notes that there has been an increase in the percentage of children receiving Free School Meals (FSM) who have achieved 5 or more grade A-C GCSEs including mathematics and English from 22%(2007) to 36% (2012). However, these figures were not only for white, low income families. The results in 2012 for different ethnic groups show that ‘any white British background’ was well below the national average and of this group, those from the most deprived backgrounds, show the largest difference in attainment related to income grouping. Only 36% in 2012 of children from white low income families left school with 5+ A-C GCSEs including English and mathematics compared to 63% of children from wealthier backgrounds. Unlike other ethnic groups the gap of achievement is widening for white low income students. The improvement of this group has been 13% compared to 22% for Bangladeshi pupils (the

next lowest rate of achievement). The issue for white British low income pupils is not only one of gender as both males (26%) and females (35%) have low achievement rates.

The achievement at the end of key stage 2 in 2012 shows a similar pattern; with 66% FSM children achieving level 4 in mathematics and English, 82% for non FSM children, a gap of 16%. In 2007 the gap was larger at 24% however, the marking of the tests changed to be teacher assessed where previously all papers were centrally marked. These changes to marking have affected the reliability of using yearly comparative figures.

Although the Ofsted report (Ofsted 2013) does show that there are pockets where white British low income students have made better than average progress, in the main low attainment continues to persist for the large majority. This research focuses upon white working class students who achieve in education, observed over a period of time in school. As the researcher, I observed that the majority of students achieved very low examination results in the school, while every year a few students from the same estate, living in similar levels of poverty broke this pattern and did achieve. These students had somehow overcome the barriers previously identified to explain the failure of working class to achieve in the education system.

The National Statistics Bulletin (2007) stated that 3.8% of students from highly deprived areas are high achievers compared to 17.7% from less deprived backgrounds. While there is national evidence of academic success by students from highly deprived areas there appears to be little research into why this occurs for these few students.

Government policy has largely focused on the impact of school leadership in raising attainment, believing that a change in leadership will change the educational success of the school rather than looking to tailor school practice to school context. In 1998, the Social Exclusion unit noted that OFSTED inspection results placed five times more schools from deprived areas in 'special measures'. The framework of inspections, measures schools against national benchmarks and little consideration has been given to the context of the school.

Ofsted inspection figures (Ofsted, 2012) show that there is a gap between the least deprived and most deprived schools; as at 31st December 2012, of the 4032 least deprived schools inspected, 56% were graded good and 30% graded outstanding compared to the 4052 most deprived schools inspected of which 50% were graded good and 16% were graded outstanding. This means that 36% of the most deprived were placed in a negative category (needs improvement or special measures) while only 16% of least deprived were.

The Academies programme was originally set up in 2002 to challenge the culture of underachievement by introducing new leadership ideas, governance, innovative teaching and curriculum. There is little evidence of real improvement. Changes have occurred to their catchment areas altering the social structure of their intake (*Gorard, 2005*). With improved facilities parents may select these new academies which are more independent and can allow parents greater influence in the education of their child. Ball (2003) has described the education market as a strategy designed to preserve the advantages of the middle classes. The new move in the academies programme allowing 'outstanding' and 'good' schools to become academies or 'free schools' appears to mirror this.

Contextual data on the study area

Acorn data compares the cohort of a school population to that of the local area and nationally. The school in this study had 73.5% of its students who came from families classified as 'Hard Pressed' compared to 17.3% nationally. Of this 73.5%, 55.2% were classed as 'Struggling families' and 18.3% were 'Burdened single parent families'. The main housing of the student population was shown as terraces or flats. 41.5% of the students claimed Free School Meals compared to the national average of 15.2%.

The census data of 2011 presents a picture of poverty for the research school's ward. The area had a high proportion of social housing, a quarter of which were flats, and a third of the housing had no central heating, with overcrowding the highest in the area and above the national average. Unemployment was the highest in the area, double the local average; with long term unemployment also the highest. The most popular sector of employment for this ward was within retail, again the highest for this area, giving rise to low incomes.

The contextual picture based on data from Acorn, the 2011 Census and IDACI (see Chapter 3 - The Quantitative Data) has been used to identify the level of poverty. Poverty is viewed in terms of low incomes, poor quality housing and living conditions, and limited local employment opportunities.

Aims of the Research

The perspective which is central to this study is that of a school leader who was viewing 'life stories' presented by parents and students that could help to explain why some white working class students living in poverty were educationally successful with a view to informing the work of school leadership and management. The research used Nash's (2010) concepts of structure, practice and disposition as a diagnostic and explanatory tool to explore how academic success was created for some students. (See chapter 2 for a fuller discussion.)

The term 'Working Class' requires clarity in its use as no one group is homogenous. However, for this research it is used operationally, to refer to those people who are employed in the lower tier jobs (National Statistics Socio-economic classification 2010) or who move in and out of employed work and who claim benefits. (These vary from tax credits to support an earned low income, to those claiming full unemployment benefits.) This low income group have also been documented as having limited access to educational opportunities, for example by being unable to pay for travel beyond the local school whether or not this was deemed most suitable for their child; and opportunities to move into post 16 education and to university (Evans 2006). The white working class, Jones (2011) argues, are portrayed in the media as a form of 'low life' represented by the term 'Chav'. This stereotyped image of a group within our society who it is assumed have few values, little or no morality and lacking intelligence fuelled by the media has, Jones argues, become commonplace. This research explores the hidden structures, beliefs and practices of our society, local communities and individuals to unpack how some white working class children were able to break the trend of underachievement and succeed against the odds. Whatever prejudices and assumptions I held were challenged by the process of this research.

The central research questions were:

1. What are the critical factors within the spheres of structures, practices and dispositions that enable educational success?
2. What part does the school play in contrast to family life in working class students' academic success

Impact of this research upon the researcher

The impact of undertaking research is not always fully appreciated at the start of a process or while it is being carried out; this research has caused me to reconsider my professional role as a teacher and to change the focus of my educational career as a result.

At the start of the research the primary aim for me as a participant researcher was to discover key factors in a child's life that enabled them to succeed within the boundaries of the British educational state system. To be successful was then viewed, by me and officially as the ability of the individual to gain a number of qualifications which enabled them to move forward to the next stage in the academic system, ultimately gaining a place within a Russell Group university. This view was incorporated in Ofsted judgements about the success of schools and the targets set based solely around the number of students achieving certain grades and finally

those moving on to Higher Education especially into particular universities. As a school leader gaining 'outstanding' in an Ofsted inspection is the mark that you have 'done a good job' and that you have 'done the correct thing' for all your students.

Embarking on this research I was challenged by the richness of the culture the students held and existed within. This culture did not match that held to be 'correct' by the education system they had to function in. Although parents wanted what was best for their children this did not mean that their values shifted, and holding a vast amount of academic qualifications was not seen by all as central to their cultural background. The research challenged my professional beliefs as students achieved a full complement of GCSEs at the highest grades but selected to go to work, in a family trade rather than studying further. Meeting these individuals some years later to see them living comfortable and fulfilled lives challenged my initial motivation and professional outlook and leadership style. The current educational monitoring system would deem schools as a failure if high performing students opted out of education at 16 (changes to the current education system means that young people must remain in education or a form of training until they are 18). Schools are placed in special measures and reported as having low expectations if they are not following the stated pattern for educational success.

With the current unemployment in the UK for graduates being at 7%, with one third of graduates also working in low paid manual jobs (Espinoza 2015), of whom, the largest proportion are from a working class background, the education system in England does not seem to me now to be 'outstanding' and 'requires improvement' to especially address the issues of social class imbalance. Kayleigh working as a hairdresser with 12 grade 'A' GCSEs, living comfortably and happy in her chosen career is surely a success story for the school. This research has changed how I view education and especially my cultural awareness of the white English culture. As the education system seeks to promote British values it does not necessarily draw on the broadness and richness of all cultural backgrounds. From the experiences of the lives of the young people in my school, it was clear that capital comes in many forms, and just because it may not fit within the 'norm' of the middle class does not mean that it is not valuable. As a school leader the drive is not now to conform to the principles that grade schools but instead to work to challenge and transform them enabling success to be seen in many different forms.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

In order to understand how a small minority of white working class students managed to break the trend of underachievement it was important to identify the barriers to working class educational success.

The underpinning theoretical basis for this investigation lies in the research on working class communities, particularly that of Young, and Willmott, (1957) *Family and Kinship in East London*; Jackson and Marsden (1966) *Education and the working class*, and Evans (2006) *Educational Failure and working class white children in Britain*; in the work of Bourdieu as interpreted by Nash (2010) and in the recent work by Kupfer (2015) which extends Bourdieu's analysis, particularly the notion of habitus, to understand why some working class students can be upwardly mobile.

There are two reasons for discussing the texts on working class communities in particular. Firstly they were studies of working class communities such as the one I was studying. Secondly, Young and Willmott provide a paradigm case of Bourdieu's notion of reproduction in terms of class and patriarchy. I shall outline the account given by Young and Willmott of East London as it will be a way of identifying the major themes found in Bourdieu's writing while Jackson and Marsden (1966) and Evans (2006) provide further insights into Bourdieu's analysis.

In East London the fathers work at the Docks; in my research the fathers did similar manual work in a local car factory. Both locational studies show a division of labour between the fathers and mothers within the family which defines the practices. The local pub in both my research and Young and Willmott's describes a culture which expresses a world view consistent with the structure of work. Part of this culture is to foster similar dispositions in their children. Jackson and Marsden (1966) looked at working class children in Huddersfield who had attended grammar school. This work provided an insight into the barriers they met and the impact it had on their identities. The work by Evans (2006) is more recent, studying a working class community in Bermondsey which also assesses the impact of educational practices and policy upon the students in this community.

In order to understand the role of Bourdieu's theory in this study I first need to outline some of his key concepts, to lay the platform to how they are used here.

Bourdieu's Theory of Educational Inequality

Capitals

In a series of books (Bourdieu, 1986, Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu, 1997; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), Bourdieu argues that each person exists in society within different social and institutional arenas, which he calls fields. Individuals are located in fields according to their capital resources. Bourdieu (2006) identifies three forms of capital: economic, social and cultural.

Economic Capital

This concerns wealth and income which can be converted into further income, property rights and in buying a privileged education. When Bourdieu was writing in the late 1960s and 1970s the gap in income and wealth appeared to be closing. Now, however, it is polarising (Piketty, 2014). It is possible for the wealthy to buy an expensive education for their children through private schooling or by buying into the catchment areas for good state schools. Money capital is a key resource for buying privilege.

Social Capital

Social capital (networks, trust relationships) consists of all actual or potential resources linked to a social network or less formal relationships that provide the individual with tangible advantages. Such networks are expressions of power relations, those from the professional middle class can convert their social capital networks into personal advantage. An example of the links between social capital and advantage is illustrated in the number of Conservative MPs in the cabinet who were educated at Eton and Oxbridge.

In school, friendship is an important aspect of the development of social capital, it underpins and enables secure social identities (Ridge, 2006). Friendships allow for the development of social skills, learning to accept others and provide the opportunities for young people to develop new social relationships within their community. Teenage cultural practices are used to express personal identity and this is often through clothing. Wearing the 'right' clothes allows the teenager to fit into their social group. Working-class teenagers battle with low budgets and fitting in with all 'the labels'. This pressure is also seen as friendship groups go on school trips. The young people who may need to experience these trips frequently do not as they know the financial pressure on their families and fail even to ask if they can go, making other excuses to friends about why they will not attend. In turn this may well limit their friendships to those from the working class, in contrast to the aim of comprehensive schools to enable children from all social backgrounds to mix, reinforcing the divisions in social capital and friendship networks.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital (knowledge, skills, education) come in three states: embodied in the individual as long lasting dispositions of mind and body; the objectified state in cultural goods i.e. books, dictionaries, instruments and institutionalised as academic credentials. Cultural capital is seen as central to the advantage that the professional middle class can gain through education. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that the reason the professional middle class 'wins' in education is because the curriculum and pedagogy of the school is consistent with the practices of the home, whereas working class students experience the curriculum and pedagogy of the school as alien.

There is empirical evidence to support this account of cultural capital. Nash and Harker (2006) studied the number of children's books found in homes. Overall 54% of professional status families had over 100 children's books while only 20% from unskilled / manual workers did. Working class homes that had more than 100 children's books in them had children with reading scores which were more or less equal to those families of professional economic status who had fewer than 50 books. The ability to purchase books is not the sole factor here, as the survey into the reading time spent with 5 year old children shows. The amount of time children were read to varied also with socio-economic status, with 63% the professional class reading every day to their children, while only 29% of the low-skilled workers did.

Social class therefore, has an impact on pupils' reading attainment (Lauder, Kounali, Robinson, Goldstein, 2010). The same is not true for mathematics, as mathematics is mainly taught in school, whereas literacy and language development is a central part of the home culture of more affluent families. Lauder et al, (2010) found that low achieving children who attended schools which had a higher social class intake, performed better compared to those who did not. Jackson and Marsden (1962) observed this same principle in Huddersfield where working class children who attended primary schools in more affluent areas achieved higher qualifications than those who did not. Being immersed in an educational culture daily at school which contained fluent conversation, provided exposure to a variety of literature, debate, and discussion of the wider world provided these working class children with a literacy rich environment to learn in.

Reading is also linked to language development. A child who has limited verbal skills by the time they start school will fail to develop the secondary language skills of reading and writing. Bernstein's socio-linguistic theory showed that speech is generated by principles, shaped by social class (Nash, 2006). Middle class speech tends to be explicit, universal and abstract whereas working-class speech tends to be more restricted, implicit, particular and concrete. Bernstein said that middle class children can move between restricted and elaborated code

(particular and abstract) and can identify the context in which each should be used more readily. Working class children did not have access to the elaborated code or the understanding of where it should be used. Hanson (2002) studied mothers and their three year old children; he found that the speech of the higher professional socio-economic group was elaborate while the white lower working-class mother's speech was restricted. The consequence of this difference in speech was that working-class children tend to underachieve at school, in comparison with middle-class children. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) suggest that the language and curriculum of the school is consistent with the elaborated code of the professional middle class. Evans (2006) reinforced this in her study of 'Tom'. There was nothing to suggest that he had not grown up in a language-rich environment but rather, the values held and what was learnt as appropriate conversation, differed greatly from the middle-class acceptable norms of language development held by teachers and schools. Labov (1970) stated that those who fail at school do so because their language is different from what is the norm in schools. Although he argued that no one language was superior to the other, he accepted that differences in speech style between home and school could put a child at a disadvantage.

White working class parents observed by Evans (2006) in Bermondsey, wanted more than anything for their children to do well at school. Although holding this strong desire their everyday practices did little to support this, much of their social life inhibited this success. If a white working class child did well at school Evans (2006) observed, the parents did not take the credit for this success, while if the child was struggling they again did little hoping that things would get better. There was a divide between home and school leaving what happened in school in school, and when things went wrong white working class parents lacked the confidence and skills to complain. It is here that the disparity between the cultural and social capital of the middle class and the working class is clearly seen. When a middle-class child has a problem in school the middle-class parents join forces immediately, draw on their social links to bring in the professional support and together approach the school as a united force, enabling rapid change. However, white working class parents are more accepting of what the school says in fear that they do not know any better. They believe they have neither the right nor capacity to seek improvement. If they decide to speak to the school, they go as individuals, feeling that it is their duty to cope with it alone. Needing support from others would show weakness in the family (McNamara Horvat et al 2006).

Fields

Naidoo (2004) describes Bourdieu's account of fields as follows:

According to Bourdieu, social formations are structured around a complex ensemble of social fields in which various forms of power circulate. The relative autonomy of fields varies from one period to another, from one field to another and from one national tradition to another (Bourdieu, 1993). ... The field is structured in a hierarchy in the sense that agents and institutions occupy dominant and subordinate positions. These positions depend on the amount of specific resources that are possessed in relation to other occupants. (p.458).

Within these fields there are particular stakes that structure the competition for advantage. For example, in primary and secondary education in England, the stakes now concern success in the various tests and examinations such as GCSE and A-Levels. To be successful means having students and schools that achieve highly in these tests. Judgements, related to performance, are made through league tables and Ofsted inspection. Until recently, the latter were informed by the test results. What is significant about these stakes is that they have become embedded in the consciousness of the actors in this field, parents, teachers and students. Naidoo (2004) refers to this as a form of socialisation that:

“engenders in individuals a 'disposition' below the level of consciousness to act or think in certain ways; and on the network of objective relations between positions that agents or institutions occupy in the field” (p. 459).

The focus on exam results has become the primary form of socialisation in education, to which I can testify since as a head teacher, it was through success in public exams that I have defined 'success' in this thesis. It is only through the process of writing this thesis that I have been able to critically reflect on this field and its practices.

Habitus

In this context, it is within these fields that power relationships structure behaviour, in the sense that they set social limits and possibilities to agents' actions. What links agents to fields or social structures is what Bourdieu calls the habitus. Bourdieu describes people as having a 'habitus' which is the embodiment of social class structures, values and attitudes. Everyone's personal history, preferences and dispositions frame their course of action. The habitus comprises a range of dispositions which are:

“durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions” (1990) (cited in Reay 2004b, 433).

The concept of habitus has been subject to major debate in the UK. For example both Halsey et al (1980) and Goldthorpe et al (1987) rejected Bourdieu’s concept of habitus as being a form of structuralism which meant that it was unchangeable, whereas both Halsey and Goldthorpe and their colleagues were interested in the possibilities of upward mobility, which meant that they would reject a structuralist account of education and mobility.

However, Reay has argued that habitus does not need to be interpreted as predetermining a person’s life course although it does influence a person’s life trajectory (Reay 1998; 2004). Social class, education, upbringing and past choices all form part of the habitus and determines in part the behaviour of an agent in the field. Individuals move in and out of the fields with their habitus. However, their habitus changes as they move into a particular field in relation to the ‘rules’ of that field (doxa). The rules or doxa are imposed by the most powerful agents or groups in the field, those with the relevant capitals, therefore operating a limiting influence on action in that field. Bourdieu noted that agents within the social field don’t always agree on the doxa, some agents take up a position of transforming the rules to their own benefit. Brown (1997) provided a good example of this, interpreting the move to the marketization of education, as an example of the middle class seeking to impose the new rules associated with markets in education, to their advantage, because they have greater power to exercise choice. Therefore a child from a middle class background is more likely to succeed within the British education system as their capital is in the right currency and their habitus is aligned to the expectations of the school.

Following this brief theoretical background, we can now turn to how it has been used in Nash’s (2010) interpretation of Bourdieu. Nash focussed on three aspects of Bourdieu’s theory, structures, comprising the three forms of capital; their application in fields which comprise the practices within and between fields and dispositions which comprise a person’s habitus, their orientation in negotiating fields. In this thesis the concepts of structure, practices and dispositions are used to classify and analyse the data. In order to understand why some working class students are successful we can hypothesise that it is the interaction between structures, practices and dispositions that will provide an understanding of what may have changed in and between these theoretical categories to enable some working class students to be successful.

Structures, Practices and Dispositions

The classic study of Bethnal Green (East London) in 1950s (Young and Willmott, 1952) showed the key structural characteristics of a working class community. Within this community the male was the dominant wage earner who maintained rule over the family and his wife but could be described as being distant from the central core of the family. Working long hours in manual labour in the docks of East London the male would sleep and eat within the household when not at work and also spend lengthy periods of time at the local neighbourhood pub with his peers. The local pub was frequently seen as an extension of the family house, and family members would flow between the home 'front room' and the pub. It was the mother or wife who formed the central core of the family and provided the thread between the extended family units. When a couple were married they formed three units, the husband's family, the wife's family and the couples newly formed social unit. The working class community was formed of many of these units which were closely linked and interlinked. The wife's family remained closely tied to the newly married couple with the wife returning 'home' on a daily basis to be with her mother and other sisters (the non-paid working elements of the family) who would gather to eat meals together returning home in time to prepare and cook the evening meal for their husbands. When the couple had children the wife's family would play a major role in the upbringing of their grandchildren, allowing the wife time to complete the household chores.

When a young couple were first married, due to the shortage of council housing available, they would live with the wife's parents. As the rent collector completed his rounds the mothers would enquire about available housing and discuss particular houses they knew would be coming available. These good relationships that were built up over the years would mean that housing as it became free would be passed via the rental officer to family members on his round; this maintained the close community and daughters would live in the same street or adjoining streets to other family members. Unmarried brothers and sisters would frequently live with their parents and on the death of the parents they would move into the home of one of their sisters or brothers and so the close knit family ties continued. The structure of the community being formed of these interlinked families, where brothers and sisters married into each other's families, created a well-developed kinship which was highly characteristic of working class families; but not so common in the middle class who had distance between the family elements and functioned more as separate married units rather than the interweaved social web found on the working class housing estates. There has been some change in the council housing stock. During the 'Thatcher government' years there was the wide scale sale of the council housing stock. In the 1970's 2 in 5 of the UK population lived in council housing, but by 2005 this has changed to 1 in 10, and the social divide has been deepened by this. Two-thirds of social housing tenants belong to the poorest two-fifths of the UK's population,

with half of all social housing being located in the poorest fifth of our neighbourhoods, creating 'sink' estates of very poor housing and high levels of poverty (Jones, 2011).

The socio-economic structure of East London was dominated by key trades, the local industry which the workers walked to, with the son following their fathers into the same job. The job world appeared very insular to the working class community of East London. The father who had learnt the trade allowed his son to work alongside him to learn from him. The son gained the job on the reputation of the father or family member if the father was deceased. The need for a school led education was not a feature within these working class communities where the son followed their father and the daughter once married lived a shared life with her mother and sisters as she brought up her family and ran the family home. The work by Evans (2006) in London also illustrated this, and she argued that working class children worked in the same job roles as their parents and therefore would remain within the same socio-economic group. 'These were communities structured by paid work and patriarchy and tight knit practices based on home, work and the pub. In turn this generated the dispositions that sustained the community.

Young and Willmott (1952) described in the latter section of their book how these key structural features of the working class community started to disappear as communities broke up with the movement out of the docklands area of East London out to the new housing estates. It is possible that once an estate has been able to take root, the new community can embed the same structures again. This was true of my research estate, a close knit community living in terrace style housing or high rise flats. The same family units could be found living in the estate only streets apart, brothers and sisters linked across several families forming the community web. The employment of my research estate was dominated by a multinational car manufacturer, which employed large numbers of the local workers, for semi-skilled labour. The family size on my research estate was frequently large with the mother as a central figure within the household. Aspirations of the young were frequently limited and youth crime was on the increase as socio-economic pressures took away the 'dreams' of their future. The aspects that dominated kinship of East London in the 1950s still survive in my research working class estate. Although education is seen as a key to social mobility, when the education system fails the working class they take the only route open to them, that made by their parents. Bourdieu (1986) argued that white working class children will follow the habitus that by identifying the space occupied by their parents, as their own, they exclude themselves from other possibilities.

Cotè (2005) argued that over time social practices change and there has been a rise in individualisation which reflects a move away from the society that Young and Willmott

observed in Bethnal Green in the 1950s. A clear expression of the emphasis on market individualism and choice came with the introduction of the Education Reform Act, 1988.

What this account of working class community life shows are the elements of structure, the division of labour between men and women and their communities, the practices within these communities and the dispositions that were developed as a result of these practices, with respect to gender relations and to education and paid work. It also touches on the themes of continuity and change, while indicating the ways in which change does not, of itself, overcome the reproduction of inequalities.

Creating a New Doxa for the Educational Field: The Education Reform Act.

This Act produced a marked change by creating an educational market where schools and local authorities were placed in direct competition with each other, creating what Brown (1997) has called a parentocracy. Previous educational systems had divided schools into grammar, secondary modern or technology schools, then moving to a holistic approach with the comprehensive school, but in 1988 the market forces of education came into being. To provide information about how effective a school provided a 'service', the performance league tables were created basing their ranking on absolute achievement levels. The performance tables and accompanying testing has a powerful effect both on the schools and on the individuals, with some schools being classed as 'failing' and students identifying themselves as 'levels', if they fail to perform, they take on the identity of 'failed' student (Reay and William, 1999).

Did this new 'doxa' help the achievement of working class students? Research (Thompson, 2002; Lauder, Kounali and Robinson, 2010) has shown that income and material deprivation has a great effect on achievement. Schools with high levels of students with special educational needs, behavioural needs or with students claiming Free School Meals (FSM) score less well than schools with similar low levels in these measures. The setting of floor targets by government has had a negative impact upon the overall aspirations of the educational landscape within England. When a government sets a floor target standard of 50% for all pupils leaving school to have five GCSEs including English and mathematics at level C and above, the underlying message is that 50%, therefore, will not achieve this and the government is 'content' to allow this to happen. When the same principle is applied to Key Stage 2 targets the impact can have a more dramatic effect. Achieving the floor target of 60% of pupils gaining level 4 in both English and mathematics does not translate to this 60% going on to convert to the end of Key Stage 4 floor target. The wrong messages have been created by the government targets which drives the funding and resource flow into our schools. School

leaders have been chasing targets which will not bring about sustained improvement for all, but have created a highly divided and divisive educational environment, which further adds to the attainment gap.

Recent research into 'The Tail' (Marshall, 2013) examined the group of students who are deemed by government educational measures to be underachieving and being failed by the system. 'The Tail', those children who leave the education system below the benchmark (168 GCSE Average Point Score) have some shared characteristics, being dominated by students from families with low income, low social, economic and cultural capital but only 25% of these children are receiving Free School Meals (FSM), the measure used by the government to allocate additional resources to schools via the pupil premium. Similarly the proportion of EAL students has an identical profile within 'The Tail' as it does across the school population. A review of Contextual Value Added (CVA) scores in British school of 2011 lead Arnadico and Marshall (2013) to state,

"speaking another language at home predicts higher rather than lower outcomes for most children. It appears that the UK has done a good job of absorbing immigrants in educational terms and the educational gap for this group has been eliminated by the time of the second generation". (Arnadico and Marshall p. 23 in Marshall (Ed) 2013)

CVA scores although not used now by OFSTED and the government as a measure of school success did previously allocate higher scores for schools with high levels of pupils with EAL. This measure may have wrongly created a picture of high levels of 'success' within schools which was linked to 'their good practice' when in fact the underlying cultural and social capital of these communities played a more dominant role, and further divided our educational system. Leunig and Wynes (2013) have argued that if all schools replicated the work of school improvement that was carried out in Tower Hamlets then 'The Tail' would be greatly reduced. There is a debate about what caused success in Tower Hamlets (see e.g. Marshall, 2013). However, in light of research into cultural capital, ethnicity and neighbourhoods this claim seems controversial. Andrew Adonis, when visiting Sunderland exemplified this when he made reference to the closure of the shipyard and coal mining industries in the town and local region, stating that 20 years ago a young person could walk straight into a job in the shipyard or mines; now that the jobs have gone they might as well walk straight on into the sea. (Marshall 2013)

The work by Feinstein (2003) studied the cognitive differences between children of different socio-economic groups. He found that high early achievers from disadvantaged backgrounds were overtaken between the ages of 5-10 by the poor early achievers from advantaged backgrounds. These results do not necessarily show a change in the actual cognitive ability

of the child but deterioration in performance due to social context. The results showed that there was a gap already present by the age of 22 months, between the highest group and the lowest group (Feinstein, 2006). The modal result for children aged 5 years of professional status families is located in the highest quartile, while for those from the lowest socio-economic status families it was in the bottom quartile. 15% of this bottom quartile achieved no qualifications by the age of 26. Similar patterns of social mobility were found by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2015). They found that children born in 1970, had similar patterns of distribution. The commission concluded that there were five common factors aiding child social mobility : i) Parents who had been educated to degree level, ii) childhood mathematical skills, iii) presence of non-cognitive skills iv) a secondary education at a grammar or private school, and v) the child attaining a degree level qualification. Milburn (CASE, 2015) argued that “demography is still destiny” in Britain. The ‘glass ceiling’ and ‘floor’ block deprived children with academic potential from securing the top jobs. Private or Grammar school education provides the extra ‘soft skills’ which children from higher socio-economic groupings have from birth. Getting the ‘top jobs’, Richardson (2015) argued, is related more to having confidence, being poised, polished, articulate, having the right accent, having experienced foreign travel and being able to function in social gatherings. All these rest within the habitus of the middle class rather than that of the working class.

That working class families are still at a disadvantage, can partially be explained by the new educational market ‘doxa’. The availability of school data has been used by some middle class parents to select where they will send their child to be educated. Families have been known to move to be closer to the more desirable schools leaving the others starved of a comprehensive cohort of students. Parental choice of schools has had a social division effect, having an impact on the housing market and this reinforces social segregation (Gibbons, 2001). Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995) divided parental choosers of schools into three categories, the privileged and/or skilled choosers, the semi-skilled choosers and the disconnected parent who leaves the choice of the school to the child believing that being happy is the most important aspect of this choice. Less affluent parents are more likely to send their child to the local school. The social network bonds on white working class estates can keep people from looking outside their estate, wishing for their children to be educated with friends and family. White working class parents do tend to send their children also to ‘white’ schools. Evans (2006) argued that this is not so much racist but ‘placist’. The defence of the place and the way of life of the people and community, the kinship and residence, is the basis for this.

Agency, the School and Working Class Culture

So far the account that has been given has been in terms of the conditions external to the school that have had an influence on school outcomes. This description does not give space for student agency and that may be important in this study. We need, therefore to turn to ethnographic studies to see how working class students have responded to the alienating conditions they have found in schools. Willis (1977) in his work 'Learning to Labour' identified a counter-school culture of the 'Lads'. He argued that these 'lads' frequently were identified by their clothes and this had class significance. The 'lads' understood the working class struggle and identified early with it and in order to become adult within this structure took on board the cultural identity early to be 'adult' within their perceived world. Brown (1987) criticised Willis' conclusions pointing out that there were a range of responses that students could make, of which resistance was only one. Brown (1987) was interested in the different ways that students existed in school and their development into adulthood. Brown outlined three groups: 'getting in' those students who rejected school as boring and were more concerned with getting into their culture properly as they moved towards being working-class adults; 'getting on' students who accepted school and did what they had to have modest success, the ordinary kids; 'getting out' these were the 'Swots' who worked hard to achieve the best possible results in examinations, aiming to gain the qualifications needed to compete with the middle-class and therefore 'get out' of their class origin. The Swots he explained had a 'normative orientation'; they saw the intrinsic value of education, they were motivated to learn for its own sake. At the other end of the continuum was those of an 'alienated orientation' who only attended school because it was compulsory by law; they had a fully developed anti-school culture and generally gained few or no examinations. Sitting in the middle of the continuum are the instrumentally orientated, who see that education has a value to an extent. The Alienated orientated he named the 'Rems' who staked their claim within the adult working class at the earliest possible opportunity. The vast majority, the alienated are the 'ordinary kids' content within the working-class and looking for a 'tidy' working-class job. In an economic depression the 'ordinary kids' will become further alienated from school and academic study. With little chance of getting a job why should they put effort into school study?

There is an added dimension when viewing how female working class students respond to the alienating conditions found in schools. Alongside class is the gender issue. Within this study the overall results between the male and female students were not significantly different but it is worth briefly raising the point that the issue of gender does have an additional impact. Skeggs (1997) in her ethnographic study of British working class women, showed the relentless self-doubt and self-scrutiny that characterised their everyday actions and decisions. According to Skeggs, being working-class is about always seeing oneself in others' eyes as

"less than," as not "right". At the heart of this self-scrutiny is a personal search for respectability and a desire to be feminine, both she argues are not truly compatible with working class lifestyle choices.

The ambiguous attitude towards school by working class students is a theme that has been developed in the literature. The problem confronting working class students that led to this ambiguity was clearly described by Jackson and Marsden (1966). Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is exemplified in the ethnographic research by them. In their study of working class students attending grammar schools in Huddersfield in the 1960s, they showed that unlike the middle-class students who started school with an educational advantage and saw the grammar school as a natural extension of home-life, for the working class student the gap between school and home-life was wide. When the working class child went off to grammar school relationships with local people and 'neighbourhood life' disappeared or diminished, often actively encouraged by the grammar school staff. Family life saw increased stresses especially as knowledge increased dividing the child from their parent. The most successful working class children in the grammar school system were observed to have particular characteristics. The child was born into a small family, a third were single child families. Although living in 'working class' housing often this was near to a successful primary school where the tone and pace of the educational experience was set by the middle class parents. Over a third of the successful children had parents who had some connection or 'root' within the middle class themselves and continued to share many of its aspirations. Jackson and Marsden termed these parents the 'sunken middle class'. They noted that it was common that the mother was the one who had married beneath her class and 'sunken' into the working class, pointing again to the importance of the background both socially and educationally of the mother having the overriding effect upon the child. For those who were not 'sunken middle class' two-thirds were from the upper levels of the working class. These parents had experience of secondary education and some were living out their obstructed longings through their children and within these homes considerable pressure was placed on the children to do well in education.

"The working-class mother whose occupational status is higher than her husband's is likely to come in contact with middle-class persons and to acquire middle-class values. If her husband's status seems unlikely to improve, she may attempt to realize her aspirations through her children by encouraging them to develop middle-class interests and objectives" (Krauss 1964, p. 86).

This pressure was not as powerful as that of the middle class parents as it was not accompanied by the same confidence. The final factor observed was that children whose

parents had become leaders or organisers within their local communities also saw educational achievement. The question is whether this type of explanation is still relevant to the sample of successful working class students in this study.

Students frequently live by two rule codes, following rules in school about behaviour, language, work ethic, and expectations which are at odds to their home life. The development of a 'duality of being' (Reay, 2006) is exemplified in 'Shaun's story'. Shaun develops a tension between his desire to fit into his secondary school 'laddish' world and his desire to do well. In Bourdieu's theoretical framework he described two world states. The first where "*the habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product it is like a fish in water*" (page 127, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) where one does not feel the weight of the world around it. The opposite is where there is tension between the social order and an individual's psychological processes resulting as "a fish out of water". Reay argued that Shaun was caught up in 'a paradox of the dominated', where 'resistance may be alienating and submission liberating' (Bourdieu and Patterson, 1990). Middle-class boys balance their need to achieve masculine peer affirmation by making academic success appear 'cool' (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1999). Nayak (2003) argued that the reverse is the case for working class boys who, when feeling that their masculinities are threatened, will be defensive and aggressive. 'Failure' in school and therefore projected 'failure' in work can create a highly defensive school boy, who will not engage in formal education. Some boys are able to live in the duality as long as they are not seen to be trying too hard even when they are (Jackson, 2003). Boys may be motivated to protect their sense of self-worth rather than succeed at school. Covington (1992, 1998) argued that a student can gain a good boost to their self-worth through a good school grade while the reverse of a bad report has the opposite effect. Procrastination gives the possibility that if one had worked or had enough time, then it could have been achieved. For the working-class lad the problem is not achievement, but not being seen to have worked at it. Those who will not achieve, Jackson (2009) argued, sabotage the chances of the others by their disruptive behaviour in class, "if I cannot do it neither can they." (Jackson, 2006, p.141)

In order to 'fit in' Evans (2006) argued that children learn what is expected of them and how to keep their teachers happy. Ingram (2009) stated that boys who achieve academically often become ambivalent to or resist their local identity, believing that they need to reject their working class identity in order to 'fit in' to achievement. Personal identity, motivation and achievement are argued to be linked (Schick and Phillipson, 2009). There lies however, a dilemma about whether a child requires high levels of personal motivation to engage fully in academic study which then leads to high levels of achievement, or vice versa, that achieving academically leads to a child being motivated. Evans (2006) observed that girls were more likely to align their personal identity to their local community than boys, although both felt the

strong desire to be part of their community. Boys are able to run two lives, one of academic success and one linked within their local community/peer group. Reay (2009) showed that when a pupil liked their teacher this helped to motivate them and keep them happy within both worlds. Liking ones teacher and believing that they like you is a concept that is not necessarily the norm for working class children. In a study of two primary schools, students explained their view of what the teacher would consider an ideal pupil. (*Hempel-Jorgensen, 2009*) The school with the population of a lower socio-economic group felt that the way they behaved, their personal characteristics were important to the teacher, while in the school from the more middle class area, the students believed their teacher liked pupils who were clever, kind and hard working. The former group of students also believed that because of the way they behaved their teacher did not like them.

Clearly within the Bourdieusian framework there are dynamics at the school and classroom level that may reinforce the sense of working class students being 'like fish out of water' and that there may be gender dimension to this. At the same time, in some cases, relationships with teachers may mitigate the sense of alienation. However, in general the change in doxa to choice and competition has acted against the chances of working class success in school.

Habitus and a Theory of Motivation that Explains Upward Mobility

I will also be using Bourdieu's theory in order to understand the social factors that create the conditions for students' motivation to succeed. Here the work of Kupfer (2015) is particularly helpful because she extends the Bourdieusian framework to understand the upward mobility of working class students in a comparative study of Britain and Austria based on the life histories of 18 interviewees.

Kupfer examines the objective class structures that typically inhibit upward mobility for the working class, their practices and dispositions. Central to the link between structures and agents and their dispositions is the notion of habitus. As we have seen, habitus is formed by social class, what Kupfer is seeking is an explanation of how working class students can change the habitus of their class in order to succeed, in the conventional sense defined by the school. Kupfer notes four ways in which Bourdieu sees catalysts to change in the habitus.

They are:

- (1) A change in objective structures. This can come about through political change or institutional change and is related to the ways the class structure changes for example by changes in the occupational structure.
- (2) No actualization of habitus. The term, no actualisation of habitus identifies that while objective structures might remain constant, the 'meaning changes for the affected person'

(Kupfer, 2015. p.39). This may be because individual living conditions may have changed or experiences in school might have changed the meaning for students. Later she gives the example of one of her respondents who in the light of her divorce changes her habitus to engage with higher education. In this case it is the meaning of patriarchy that has changed. Where she was expected to have a domestic career, as a result of her divorce she sought to break free of the assumptions made about her role, by attending higher education. Earlier, (p.33) she sheds light on this analysis by referring to Bourdieu's distinction of social space as having two dimensions, social position which equates to the material circumstances of people's lives and to lifestyle, where the latter may be inferred as providing meaning in peoples' lives which may change.

(3) Consciousness. This relates to the way some of her respondents can see how other members of their family have been trapped by a lack of education and are, therefore, motivated to engage with it. It may also be the case, as in this study, where students see extended family members as role models of attending higher education.

(4) Pedagogic effort. This identifies cases where success at school leads on to success in higher education. In other words, success at school breeds success and the aspiration to continue in education. However, through her life history methodology, she carefully shows that her interviewees have a range of these factors contributing to their upward mobility.

In addition to these four factors, Kupfer, suggests another:

(5) Seeking truth in higher education. By seeking truth she means that students acquire a motivation to pursue a particular subject(s) because they want to understand more of the world. This new category emerges from her interviews and it is significant because it is another way of creating a space for the agency of the individual. She comments: "*Higher education was a place where abandoned, deeply shaken, violated and neglected people found ways to gain security through calculation, orientation and sense of self*" (p.161).

In this thesis, Kupfer's five categories provide a framework for analysing the reasons why these students have gained academic achievement when those around them have not.

These theoretical resources provide a way of analysing and reflecting on the data which has been collected for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology and data-collection techniques

The methodological position adopted in this research is that of realism. Realism is a methodological orientation which is grounded in the philosophy of science and social science (Haig and Evers, 2016). This approach is regarded as the principal post-positivist perspective, taking a path which lies between empiricist and constructivist methods. Sarre (1987) stated that the case for critical realism stems from Bhaskar (1975,1979) who argued that some observed data patterns could be expected by unobserved casual mechanisms, of which the social structure of class would be an example. Therefore the critical realist moves from knowledge of observed phenomena to knowledge of the structures that generate them and this may lie beyond that which is observed.

Nash (2010) has viewed the work of Bourdieu (2000), from a realist position by using the analogy of a stone hitting a window which then breaks. A conclusion could be drawn that the stone broke the glass window because the glass is breakable. However, what if three stones were thrown at a window and only one of the stones broke the glass what conclusion can then be drawn? A realist approach would state that the properties of the glass which are unseen cause the reaction with the stone. The glass has particular properties which may cause the glass to break when a sharp object hits the pane of glass; it is a combination of these unseen properties which come together at a particular point which results in the window breaking or not. What is important, to make sound conclusions within the paradigm of realism, is to link the structures with the known dispositions that shape the observed practices. Taking a realist view shapes the methodology used, by taking a mixture of what is observed through data, interviews and questionnaires then setting this within a 'real' world context for these observations, in which the views and actions are placed within particular practices and their underlying structures.

Viewing the Bourdieusian approach through a realist framework may be not anticipated as Bourdieu's thought is generally considered as "deeply rooted in anti-realist phenomenology" (Nash, 2002, p.273). This study seeks to explain academic success by disclosing the mechanisms that brought them about. All aspects of the structure of the class system, the dispositions held and the resulting practices form the conclusions. Nash argues that:

"the analytical scheme must move, in reverse order, from the observed practices of agents, to their interests and intentions, and finally, to the social structures in which they are formed." (Nash, 2002, p.273)

When applied to a school setting, the 'practice' is observed through the students' learning in class, their assignments etc. The attitude of the student towards their learning in school impacts upon their engagement and possible achievement. These dispositions have been

acquired through socialisation practices within their class-located family structure. Bourdieu's theory states that agents internalise the rules of their class as habitus and adopt practices in an unconscious way. Nash (2002) presents a realist case in the context of the sociology of education, that social bonds and the organisations they form are real (e.g. families and local communities); dispositions of agents are real; and their practices have a reproductive effect. Bourdieu's work is the stimulus for this approach and provides a vehicle for a realist approach to the sociology of education.

Background

The research took a cohort of students from a 0-19 state school located in an area of high deprivation. The school had seen an extended period of failure, having been placed in special measures, and subjected to new government initiatives, the Fresh Start programme and the Academies programme. In 2006 the local newspaper declared the school as 'The worst school in England' when academic achievement plummeted. Once out of special measures the school showed strong signs of holistic educational improvement. Throughout this 'troubled' period it was observed that every year a small number of students had achieved outstanding academic results, comparing favourably with the highest achieving schools in the UK. These students seemed to have overcome the negative factors linked with areas of high deprivation. This raised the question that if a few could achieve these standards, what circumstances were different or what made the outcome different for these students? At the time I thought, perhaps naively that, if it is possible to learn from these higher achieving students, schools, families or even whole communities could change their practices to allow for greater academic achievement for all.

The research school officially opened as an (0-19) academy in 2007, a merger of three schools, an infant school, junior school and secondary school. All the predecessor schools were low attaining but with areas of strength and signs of improvement. The merger was received positively by the secondary site but with more resistance from the primary sector. In 2009 a second Primary School classified as 'hard to shift' was added to the academy. This section was on a separate site. In 2010 the academy moved into a new building bringing the school into the heart of its community. The Academy served two council estates which consisted of many pre-fab buildings and tower blocks. The estates were situated within an affluent town but with pockets of high deprivation of which the academy served the most deprived. The community was predominantly white working class British, 92% of families were considered to be 'hard pressed'; of which 77% were classified as 'struggling' (Acorn data, 2009). Employment for the town was high while 46% of the academy students' parents claimed 'out of work' benefits. Only 7% of parents had been involved in any form of Higher Education

and this linked with a perceived culture of low expectation and low aspiration. The student population consisted of 47% with Special Educational Needs, of which 3.1% had Statements of Special Education. 41.5% of the students claimed Free School Meals. The student population ethnicity was 91.8% white British and 8.2% Ethnic Minority groups. Only 4.6% had English as an additional language.

The data collection process

(See Appendix 4 for summary table of all data collected, methods and dates)

The research took the form of a longitudinal study, gathering data from one school over a period of five years from the students from year 9 to year 13. A longitudinal study was able to trace changes over time. This study followed a group of students in one academy throughout their upper school period. The baseline data was established from their school record, using their key stage 1 and 2 results from age 7 and 11 years old, their reading age, spelling age and Cognitive Ability Test scores at age 11 and 13. From the start of the school year 9 (age 13/14) students' choices of courses and assessment results throughout the five years until they sat their final public examinations were monitored and recorded. *(See Strengths and Weakness section page 29)*

a. The use of student researchers

The data collection process started with a small group of students who were not part of the research cohort being trained as student researchers. This method was used as it was considered that students would not discuss openly if interviewed by myself, as their head teacher. In order to build greater confidence in the research, students acting as researchers together with non-directive interviewing methods were therefore, used. *(See page 34 for discussion on non-directive methods)* For children to be effective as researchers Porter and Lewis (2004) stated, the aims and purposes of the research must be clearly explained and their role fully understood. This research was explained to the student researchers and they helped to design an opening set of questions used in the structured interview/spoken questionnaire. Having carried out the initial interviews the student interviewers devised the main research questions and undertook the main interviews. Being fully involved in the initial creation of the questions for the interviews, the students had a better understanding of the purpose of the research and how to question, in order to gain relevant information for this study (Kellett, 2009).

The strength of this method was found in the simplicity of the questions which were phrased in 'child-centred' language which elicited open and honest responses from their peers. Peer

interviewing allowed the interviewee generally to feel more at ease when speaking with a peer rather than the researcher who was their site Head teacher. The student interviewers generally kept very close to the scripted questions unlike the parent interviews; this allowed for a high level consistency and therefore aided reliability. Interviewing was time consuming for all involved; by using student interviewers more could be carried out during the school day allowing for high levels of engagement throughout the research period by all participants. The disadvantages of using student interviewers came from only being able to listen to the recorded interview and therefore missing any non-verbal cues that would have aided the interpretation of what was being said, or the ability to probe deeper.

Training in research methods for the student researchers was essential for this method to be successful in this study. The students firstly interviewed two members of staff, trying out the questions and holding a discussion about possible answers and how to draw out more from the interview. After the first initial student interviews, both student interviewers listened to their recording with me and discussed how the interview could be improved and especially if they felt they had discovered answers useful to the key research questions. The student interviewers were also trained to gain consent at the start of the interview even though all the students had given written consent prior to the interview, rather than their parents solely giving consent for them. The group of student interviewers met with the students who had agreed to take part in the research and collected the initial data during the summer of 2010 (end of year 9). At the end of the initial stage and before the interviews at the end of year 11, the student interviewers worked with me to design the final stage questions and again rehearsed the interview techniques. During the final interviews I listened to the tapes and was able to feedback to the student interviewers to ensure consistency as well as depth of understanding.

The students selected to be researchers were those in the year group who were academically successful, so that they were able to relate to the classroom and school culture but who did not fit the research category of white working class and therefore, could not be part of the study. However, they had an understanding of the issues and challenges that they were confronting in terms of the rules of the competition they were engaged in. The research school had 7.7% of students from minority ethnic groups (compared to 21.7% nationally) and a proportion of these ranked in the upper academic cohort of the school. Using students of other ethnic backgrounds was not without concern. Students who have a different cultural outlook on life may interpret what was being said differently, and could change the follow-on questions or the in-depth questioning. In order to minimise this, the training undertaken for the student researchers was in the form of modelling (*as described above*) and was believed to minimise this risk.

b. Interview period

A series of interviews were conducted over a period of five years. The first student led interview were held in year 9 and established some basic understandings about the students in relation to their family structure, where they lived, how long they had lived in the area and which primary and secondary schools they had attended. Some baselines were also established to see how things over the period of time might change, establishing their perceptions about their leisure and study habits, and how they viewed their academic future.

Two student interviewers conducted interviews recording their findings on a data sheet rather than by voice recordings. The initial interviews lasted about 15-20 minutes per student. These initial interviews helped to build the student interviewers skills and to develop the outline for the questions to be used in the second interview stage. The second interviews were held at the end of year 11 and the start of year 12. These interviews were led by the two student interviewers and were audio recorded. The second interviews lasted about 20-30 minutes per student. The audio tapes were then transcribed by the participant researcher. (*See appendix*)

At a similar starting time (but spreading over a longer period of time) interviews were held with parents. These interviews were led by the practitioner researcher and were more open and free flowing than those conducted by the student interviewers. The interviews with the parents developed more into focused conversations with the parent frequently recounting stories or events to illustrate points. The parents selected not to have their interviews recorded and instead detailed notes were made during the interview. The interviews lasted between one-two hours. (*Notes of interviews – see appendix 4*)

Table 3.1: Overview and timetable of research process.

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2011-12			2012-13			2013-14			2014-15		
Students' School year	Year 9			Year 10			Year 11			Year 12			Year 13					
Term	A	Sp	Su	A	Sp	Su	A	Sp	Su	A	Sp	Su	A	Sp	Su	A	Sp	Su
Key Academic Data																		
Literature Review																		
Student researchers trained																		
First Student Interview																		
Second Student Interviews																		
Parental interviews																		
analysis of data																		
analysis and write up																		

Key A= Autumn Term, Sp = Spring Term, Su = Summer term

- c. Key school events that occurred in the period of the research which informed some of the background to the data collected.

During the students' academic year 9 the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) met with all students to discuss their option choices. The Principal and I (Site Head teacher and participant researcher) met with over half of the year 9 student body, including the students selected for the research. Meeting with the student and their parents the SLT discussed GCSE option choices and future career plans. Throughout year 10 and 11 the school closely monitored the progress of all students which was a key responsibility for myself professionally as head teacher. At a weekly monitoring meeting every Friday, we discussed the progress of selected groups and any actions required to improve their progress. No special programmes of intervention were targeted on the researched students as the school required the overall progress of improvement to be maintained in order to keep pace with government targets and changing Ofsted criteria.

In the August of 2012 the GCSE results were published and then shared with the students on results day. As participant researcher in my role as their Head teacher, I was present to share with the students the thrills and woes of the day. My personal reflections as well as a few quotes were recorded from this morning. Choices were finalised on the results day for their sixth form study and the students moved into their A-level studies again with close monitoring taking place. At the end of year 12 the students took AS-level examinations and in the August of 2014 their final A-level results were published. Again as their site head teacher I shared with the cohort students as they discovered their results and whether or not they had achieved their place at university or entered their place of employment. Further questions on A-level results day were posed to each student gathering data about university places or employment.

- d. The choice of interview questions.

The selection of questions was built around the three areas of Structures, Practices and Dispositions (*see appendix 2 question outlines*). The areas selected were drawn from the literature review together with aspects drawn from my own personal teaching experience made before embarking on the research. The selected focuses were all based on other educational and academic research. (See appendix 5, Planning diagram)

Cohort Study

This study followed students in one year group from year 9 to year 13. The year group established the overall patterns and provided the bench mark (contextual framework) for this academic cohort. Patterns and trends over the period of time were recorded in student logs. The overall year group did change over the period of time as students moved in and out of the

school; however it was believed that the cohort was large enough to withstand this fluctuation. From within the cohort a small group of higher achievers were identified and special observation of this group took place forming the case studies, these were compared to the lower achieving group to see if differences in their experiences could be identified.

The cohort study in this case enabled the examination of the interaction between structures, dispositions and practices and strengthened by the longitudinal records of each student the school held, provided evidence to establish trends and distinguish sustained patterns of change. A cohort study enabled these factors to be studied within a particular time frame so that time and progress for these students remained constant.

Selecting the sample was done on a non-probability purposive sampling method. This method is when the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. The sample used for the high achievers group was established by ranking all the students in the year group in terms of their past academic results (baseline data). The top students who had performed well above the average for the year group were then selected.

This group was then compared with a criterion group, a group that is used to compare with the high achievers group and the total year group. Comparison was made to see what combination of factors existed in the high achievers group which resulted in educational achievement but was missing or not existing in that combination in the criterion group. Purposive sampling was again used for this group identifying students who were within the top 40% of the year group, and making home location a priority linking students with identical IDACI index ratings with the students in the high achieving group. (*See map – appendix one*)

The cohort study was written as a case study of the fourteen life stories taking a biographical research approach. My intention was to tell the story of each individual focused around structures, practices and dispositions (Denzin, 1989), presenting the stories under the same headings drawing focus to similar themes across stories but allowing for the richness of their life stories to be heard as a whole.

Strengths and weaknesses of the Longitudinal study

a. Strengths

A longitudinal study allowed the data to be collected as it occurred and without the possibility of the selection of those aspects which would fit a desired outcome. The students were able to reflect on events within a relatively short period of time reducing the historical data aspect which could give a 'rose-tinted glasses' effect. Having all parties interviewed as events occurred or collect academic progress data as it happened enabled all voices to be heard, the

young people and their parents. The framework for conducting the research was able to reflect on the wider picture and consider how external factors shaped the changes that were happening to the young person as they happened rather than retrospectively.

b. Weaknesses

Carrying out research over a period of time for a longitudinal study had its problems. The major concern was that of attrition, participants leaving the study over the research period. Participants in this study were subject to leaving the academy between education years 9 and 13. Four students left the research during the longitudinal study period. Due to a high percentage of the academy population living in poor social housing the movement within the school was reasonably high as families moved to better social housing or found private housing. The stability rate for the academy in 2010 was 60.9% compared to the national average stability rate for all secondary schools of 92.2%. Ruspini (2002) suggested that longitudinal data is effected by five main things. The first is history, over a period of time events will occur to the participants in the group which will have a changing effect to them and this changes the original research characteristics. Within this study students moved house from the older eastern estate to a newer estate on the western side of town improving their IDACI index; parental income could have changed along with type of job or profession (Billy's mother changed her career at the start of the study period), changes to the size of their family or adult composition changes (none noted), friendship group changes and changes within the education establishment – staff and teaching styles (the normal pattern of school staff change occurred). Some researchers 'top-up' their original cohort if changes occur, therefore keeping the size of the group the same. It is argued that if the sample comes from the cohort group then this would not impact on the overall results. However, any changes made to the research group could be used to discredit any findings as the patterns could be the result of the changes to the participants rather than true trends developing. No additions were made to this research cohort during the study period.

The second influencing factor is that the participants would mature over the period of the study, but the group as individuals mature at differing rates. The greater maturity of some of the participants could have an effect on the way things were perceived. Testing over time, the third influencing factor, is Gorard (2001) argued, a problem for internal validity, with the need to test and then retest the same individuals. Ruspini (2002) stated that the first original interview could impact the validity of the second interview. The participant may be influenced by what they have drawn from the first interview either learning how to answer the questions to be successful or having had time to think about the subject and to use the 'acceptable views' of society to influence responses given in the second and subsequent interviews. This study

did not use the same test repeatedly over time so was not influenced by this. However learning more about the study over the three years and having time to think about what may be positive influences in a family situation on a child's education may affect the responses over the period. The researcher was aware of this and used triangulation (*see section below page 37*) between parent, student and progress data to reduce the impact.

Over time the experience of the participants change and this brings about the final two influences. Changing factors in a participant's life have a cause and effect reaction. Some of these have an instant effect while ours have a longer term effect. Understanding and explaining the longer term effect of particular changes in a person's life is more difficult. The final influence is the direction of causality as this is not always clear or singular in its effect. Being present with the students as events occurred in their lives allowed for a degree of insight, but using a realist perspective also allowed for knowledge that all that was visibly occurring was not the sole total of all that was actually having impact upon them.

Comparing data over time could be a concern. Students within the study took a variety of subjects and were taught by a variety of teachers. Using the information gained from this study would not compare directly to another cohort due to the changes to examination content from year to year, changes to pass rates, syllabus changes and schools also changing or using different examination boards. All these factors influence the patterns and trends observed within this study when compared to another school. Even if the social deprivation was similar the educational situation may have a number of factors which could create differing patterns for that cohort. Further future studies of comparison schools would help to consolidate key findings and reduce this concern.

This study used information from the participants and their parents about their past. Ruspini (2002) raised participant-related concerns here as well. Asking retrospective questions has problems of memory. The greater the time lapse between the event in question and interview time, or the greater the amount of detail required about an event then the more unreliable the responses are likely to be given by the interviewee. The information given about past events has a probability of contamination by memory; due to subsequent events, the emotional context or the social desirability of the content influences the way a memory is later recalled. Memories about childhood practices or events could be influenced by changes to the family structure, divorce, death of a family member or a particular event which has discredited a family member. A father may in the past have read each night to their child, which could account for higher literacy levels in the child. However, due to a difficult divorce or subsequent events the mother, when asked about the practices of reading to a child when young, may not retell this, believing that the father did nothing to help bring up the child. There is also the

common concern about looking at past events through the lens of hindsight, rather than giving the interpretation of what that event meant at the time; an interpretation in a current context is given. If a mother has re-married and her new partner she perceives has worked hard with her child, helping with homework or reading with them, she may credit the success to this and not to the actions of her first husband. Interviewees may also withhold sensitive information which may help explain the context of points raised, or be critical to placing a particular participant in context. Within this study school records were used, with consent, that held sensitive information, the families were happy for this to be known although the parents did not always openly discuss it at the interview stage. As the researcher, parents knew that I was aware of particular events or sensitive matters so did not openly raise them at the interview.

The Quantitative Data

For this longitudinal cohort study an initial eighteen students were selected in year 9 (fourteen staying with the research to appear in the final analysis), all were from high deprivation rated backgrounds, all had a level of achievement above the 'norm' for this socio-economic group but seven in year 11 showed to have exceptional academic success well above the national average, therefore breaking the normal pattern of low achievement linked to high deprivation rates.

The size of the sample seemed appropriate for this study as there was in depth interviewing of both the student and the parents producing a sizeable amount of data to be examined. All the parental interviews were carried out by myself, the participant researcher, while the student interviews were completed by two 'peer interviewers' from within the year group but not within the sample of this study. The sample size was created to be large enough to be able to view links and patterns while manageable within the length of this study.

The key quantitative data used for the study were: background data, progress data and examination results, in conjunction with the interviews with students in year 9, and 11/12 and with their parents in both years. The background data collected from their student files showing achievement at the end of key stage 1, 2 and 3. Post codes, Acorn data, RoNI indicators and IDACI scores were used to assess the level of deprivation and economic background of the student and their family.

Acorn data is neighbourhood based data that draws from the census and lifestyle surveys and is linked to postcodes. Schools can assess their socio-economic backgrounds through Acorn data by inputting all the postcodes to generate a group analysis. The Acorn data system divides the population of Britain into five categories, wealthy achievers, urban prosperity, comfortably off, moderate means and hard pressed.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is an index of deprivation also linked to postcodes. The index draws together economic, social and housing data and provides a single deprivation score for each Lower Super Output Areas of which Britain is divided into 32,482 areas. The government uses these figures to analyse patterns of deprivation and identify how funding should be allocated or special initiatives introduced. The score spans from 1 which is the most deprived and 0 the least deprived. The research school had a span of scores lying between 0.111 and 0.63; the most frequent scores were 0.48 and 0.54. The sample cohort spanned 0.177 to 0.54 with the majority clustered between 0.478 and 0.54, therefore being fairly representative of the school population.

The Risk of Not In education, employment and training Indicators (RoNI) were used and provided information related to: the acorn category for each student, school attendance, free school meal eligibility, and the student's safeguarding risks. All students were evaluated within this data base to see the impact of these indicators upon their risk of not completing their education up to the age of 19, giving the school a clear picture of who to target additional support to especially at the transitional points in their education at the end of key stage 3 and 4.

Key stage 1 (Standard Attainment Tests) results, (teacher assessments of a student's ability to read and spell words, comprehend a piece of text, write a set task, and solve numeracy problems) provided an overall grade for reading, writing and numeracy for each student when they were seven years old. The key stage 2 tests, formal tests that were externally marked provided assessment of progress at age eleven for each student. When this cohort sat their SATs, they completed two English related papers in reading and writing, three mathematics papers, two were written mathematical questions and the third a mental mathematics test. This cohort also sat a science paper which in later years has been phased out. At the end of key stage 3 the formal external assessments had been phased out by the time the study cohort were to sit them and instead they gained teacher assessment grades at the end of year 9 at the age of 14. In the summer of 2011 the students in the survey sat their GCSE examinations. These were either purely GCSEs with coursework and final examination papers or BTEC level 2 qualifications which involved a series of assignments the student completed over the course of years, 10 and 11. Some of the students in the survey took BTECs in Sport (Scott, Billy and Sue), Information Technology (Louise) or Business Studies (Becky). The majority took only GCSEs. One student (Tony) completed the Diploma in Engineering worth 5 GCSEs.

The Jesson rankings were used by the research school. These rankings, designed by David Jesson (2006) with The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, grouped students in relation to their key stage 2 results as a prediction of how they should achieve at GCSE. The five

groupings were 'low ability' (students have a 10% chance of gaining 5 A*-C at GCSE), the second group 'below average' (30% chance), the third group 'average ability' (60% chance), the fourth group were 'above average' (84% chance) and the final group was 'high ability' (96% chance). Jesson (2006) found that prior attainment based on key stage 2 levels was the best predictor of academic achievement at GCSE/key stage 4.

Participant Researcher reflexivity

As the lead researcher I was part of the whole school community and this allowed for observation and data collection. Awareness that criticism has been made of participant observers being subjective, biased, impressionistic, and idiosyncratic (Robson, 2002) has been personally understood and taken on board. In order to give balance to this research and overcome some of these criticisms the research drew on both quantitative and qualitative methods.

I had been the site Head Teacher for the secondary school since the 'Fresh Start' in 2004. Being a participant researcher did bring some ethical and operational difficulties. Students and parents may have answered questions asked by their site Head Teacher acting as a researcher in a way that may not be helpful to the study, giving answers that they may believe they should give rather than the truth. However, due to the long relationship they also had with me, I believe they felt able to speak more openly about their home situation. There were also clear boundaries set which safeguarded all especially as the students spoke about their home life (*Safeguarding children and young people, DFE 2014*). Should the student have stated something which placed the student in any risk, then the researcher had been trained to follow the academy's procedures relating to safeguarding and for that particular issue confidentiality and anonymity would not be kept. This situation did not occur during the period of this research for this study cohort.

My own personal values and experience have been taken into consideration throughout this research. As stated earlier (*see Introduction*) the process of the research has guided my future career decisions and the way that I wish to lead a school, focusing more on the environmental factors and the whole experience provided for the student rather than on qualification alone. Like all researchers I brought to this study my own 'habitus'. Having been brought up in a middle class family with a father who had attended higher education and owned his own engineering company; I had attended university, succeeded in my career, and lived comfortably outside of the study town. At the time of this longitudinal study my own children were finishing their GCSEs, moving on to A-levels and university was a 'natural' pathway. I was initially influenced by some of the practices that I had within my own home, reading and conversation, together with the richness of the wider experiences that my children had. As the

research progressed my own children's experience enabled me to see how much we are made up from our personal societal experience, what is termed 'normal' by one group is 'alien' to another. The concept of social, economic and cultural capital had become real to me and the reality of the lives of my students and the families on the estate I was able to view in a new light. This has not been an easy journey and the subtlety of the education system in dividing our society at an early age, allowing those who might conform to class expectations to be successful, while for the students in this study, there were major constraints to be able to pass beyond their class barrier. The impact upon the communities as they rejoiced at the success of their children, was the realisation that they would move away; leaving both the community and their family. Having an awareness of my own personal shift in understanding, allowed for a more 'objective' look at these social factors, but has led me away from finding the way forward for those schools struggling in the inspection regime; no longer willing to conform to a system which may not be fit for purpose, failing to provide quality education for all.

Non-directive interviewing

Non-directive interviewing was used with the parents, having the key areas to discuss, while allowing the parents the freedom to talk more freely and develop points raised to be discussed further, if necessary. Non-directive interviewing uses key questions/areas of discussion formulated in advance. The flow of the 'open' questions was based on the interviewees' responses and proceeded as a friendly non-threatening conversation. Since the interviewee (parent) felt more at ease, more in-depth information was gained. Tuckman (1972, cited in Cohen, 1994) stated that using a non-directive format makes the purpose of the questions less obvious, and this approach is therefore, more likely to produce frank and open responses.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used with the case study students. The basic structure of the interview was the same for all students and their parents, however, by using a semi-structured approach this allowed for some interviews to focus on particular relevant points for that particular case study to gather more in depth data for selected questions. The parent interviews were carried out by one interviewer which gave standardisation to the interviews but did carry a higher risk of subconscious bias affecting the results (Kitwood, 1977). The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee can greatly affect the results, so the interviewer was aware of the need to place the respondents at ease, ensuring meaning was understood both in the questions asked and the responses given, and note was made of any signs of the respondent holding back information.

Triangulation

The study drew on triangulation, the use of more than one method to establish greater confidence in the data gained. Denzin (1988) has distinguished four types of triangulation: data triangulation, using data from a variety of data collection, observation, interviews or documents; methodological triangulation, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches; and theory triangulation, using multiple theories or perspectives. This study used data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation was achieved through the use of interviews from two sources and the academic records, as well as an awareness of the events in the young person's life over the period of the research time. Methodological triangulation was more limited but was gained through the use of academic data to identify patterns of progress over the study period and to make comparisons between levels of academic achievement. Being able to verify what the student said with the information provided by the parent matched by the academic data provides overall validity for the study.

Informed consent

The researchers gained informed consent from both the case study participants and their parents. All students taking part in the research provided written consent at the start of the research and again at the interview stage in year 11. Their parents provided separate consent for their participation and knowledge that their child had given personal consent. There was concern over how the research was explained to those case study students who formed the lower achievers contextual group since they would recognise that they are not the highest achievers and that they were being compared to these students. There was fear that this group could feel labelled and in so doing perform to these expectations, having a major impact on their life chances. To address this possibility and to draw out the more subtle factors at play in the lives of higher achieving students, the comparison group were drawn from students who were still viewed within the school as 'achievers' and therefore reduced the possible negativity they would feel and provided comparisons which would have greater depth. Due to the researcher's position it became problematic to assess whether participants felt obliged to consent to this study, wishing to please the researcher, or because of the researcher's position. It could therefore be questioned whether or not the student could truly volunteer. Sikes (2006) believed that there is a useful acid test to assess this. He argued that the researcher should answer the question of how they would feel if they or a member of their family were being 'researched' by them using their designated methods. In this study the acid test was assessed through the discussions about the questions with the student interviewers who participated in the construction of the survey questions. It was essential that throughout the study interviewees felt that they were not 'used' or 'abused' by the process. Lather (1986)

called research that had a negative impact upon the informant 'rape research' where the researcher gets what they want and then leaves, giving little or no concern for the impact or damage the process may have had on the individuals. In this case, all the parents and students were given the opportunity to read the case studies relevant to them and were encouraged to give their feedback. All were happy for their story to be included in the final thesis. What was being aimed for was a sense of the co-production of the research and in a limited sense this was achieved.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Throughout this research anonymity was assured, and protected where possible. During the face-to-face interviews anonymity was not fully possible, but all interviewers maintained full confidentiality and no proper names were used in any written reports. The interviewees agreed to share aspects of their lives with the student interviewers and understood that no information would be shared outside of the research sphere. There were no reported incidents throughout the study to call their confidentiality into question.

In order to maintain confidentiality information was generalised if its nature could lead to personal identification of an individual. Within this study due to the nature of case studies being used every effort was taken to prevent the identification of individuals while maintaining integrity to the make-up of factors identified by each participant which was critical to the overall success of the research. The research was shared with the participants, allowing them to read it and to finally agree to their story being included in the study. This final confirmation of agreement I hoped reduced the feelings of the individuals being 'research fodder'.

Analysis of the cohort case study data

The data collected was grouped around Structures, Dispositions and Practices. Using this as a framework for conceptualizing the qualitative data to explore how the structure of the working class produced the practices observed. The analysis used inductive reasoning, conclusions were made from the observed understanding, and these are not absolutes but highly probable conclusions to draw from the data.

The student interviews were transcribed from the tape recording, and the notes from the parent interviews were written up. The data for each student was organised under particular headings (see appendix 3). The data was presented in tables and graphical formats. Data patterns or regularities were observed through the tables and graphs and conclusions that developed were verified through reference to the interview notes and quotes selected.

Ethical issues

The research carried out was by an 'insider' researcher and this raised some ethical issues (Sikes, 2006). A distinction can be made between ethics and morals. Both concern themselves with what is right or wrong, however, ethics refers to the general principles of what one should do, while morals take account of whether the action taken is within acceptable parameters of good and bad, right and wrong. Within this research the ethical issues of consent, access to information and confidentiality needed special consideration.

The issue of the relationship that existed between the students in the research cohort, their parents and how they responded to questions related to particular aspects of their life was central to this study. Gaining their informed consent was problematic as students and parents who have a positive relationship with their teacher may do as requested just to 'please' or because they believe they have to (Homan, 2001). Even being told that they do not have to or could leave the research at any point, students and parents may still not believe they could or should and that the teacher was acting in the best interests of their child.

The 'insider' researcher had access to information freely available to teachers about the student providing context both educationally and socially. This information was not collected specifically for the research but provided some of the historical picture of student progress before year 9. Everyday events of a student within a school were observed although not always noted down for research purposes. The influence of these observed events may have had some influence upon conclusions drawn, although they were not directly recorded as information for this research. By signing up for this research the students were 'studied' formally and informally for the rest of their years within the school.

Working with young people raises the question of deception, concealing the true purpose and conditions of the research. This creates a situation which questions; what is the proper balance between the interests of the study and maintaining a humane treatment of the individuals within the research? Having student researchers who assisted in the designing of the questions reduced this, together with clear explanations of the research to each participant.

Confidentiality of all information discussed was stressed to all students and parents within the study, and the importance of not sharing anything discussed in the interview beyond the recorded interview session was stressed especially to the student interviewers. (See *Confidentiality and Anonymity section above for further discussion.*) No problems were reported about a breach in confidentiality during the research period. Having presented the scripts of the case studies to the individuals and having gained consent for use there is an agreement on the information being used and all parties are happy to share the findings.

Chapter 4: The Students and their stories.

Throughout this chapter, the stories of the fourteen students can be read. Each story is presented under the framework of Structures, Practices and Dispositions, highlighting those issues believed to be most relevant. Each story is given in full to allow for each student to have their story heard, and to allow for comparisons to be made.

Mark's story.

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2b,2b,2b
Key stage 2 results	4a,4b,4c
Key stage 3 results	5a,5b,5c
Key stage 4 Results	5xA,2xB, 2xC
Key stage 5 Results	AAB
University	Exeter
CATS Score Mean SAS	93
CATS Score Mean verbal	101
CATS Score Mean Quantative	88
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	91
Jesson Rating	above

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	GCE/RSA
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	Yes
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on decisions made related to higher education or career	Sister
Homework	at home
attendance at school	98%
Career aspiration	Teacher

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Office/semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Foreman
Acorn Economic Group	Moderate Means
IDACI	0.387
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	2nd
Parental status	Married
local extended family	Grandparents

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	encouragement
Relationship to staff	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	Medium Influence
Influence of a single person	No
Parents read to them	Father
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	Yes
Holidays/ Days out	Yes

a) Structures

- Family Structure

Mark was the youngest son in a family of four. His family had lived in the town for many generations and he was surrounded by his extended family, with few members ever having moved away from the area. The family lived in a local authority semi-detached rented home. Since leaving secondary school, both Mark's parents had worked in the local area, and were classed under the Acorn category as having 'moderate means'. His older sister successfully completed her 'A' levels and went to university and studied Pharmacy at UWIST. Mark's father worked for the local manufacturing company as a foreman in the Quality Management department having previously had a time as a seaman in the navy. His mother worked as a clerk in the accounts department of another local factory.

- Family Background

Mark and his family had lived on the estate all their lives. When Mark's parents were first married they lived with his grandparents whose home was in an adjoining street. When a council house became available they moved to a house which connected to his grandparents' garden. Mark had a very close relationship with his maternal grandparents throughout his childhood.

"We have always lived close to our family; our garden adjoined my parents' garden. This was lovely for the children as they grew up having their grandparents so close."
(Mark's Mother)

Mark and his sister were very close to their grandparents and the family functioned as an extended family. The family had a long history in the area with both parents' families having lived and worked in the local factories and industries over an extended period of time.

His parents were educated up to the age of sixteen. Mark's mother attended the local secondary school while Mark's father attended the local grammar school which was the predecessor school of the research school. Mark's father went into the navy before returning to the estate to live and work. His father played rugby locally and for the county for the adult 1st XV team, this motivated Mark in his participation of sport. His mother left school and went into clerical work locally and worked part-time, being at home when Mark returned home from school.

What is critical to discuss is whether or not Mark's background showed any signs of cultural capital beyond that normally found within the working class. Jackson and Marsden (1962) spoke of the 'sunken middle class' where traditionally the mother married below her status,

but are similar affects found when small seeds or a past residue of cultural capital signify a past presence? His father having a grammar school education (Jackson and Marsden, 1962), playing rugby rather than football (Mortimer 2007; Collins 2006), and entry into the navy point to the presence of social and cultural capital being present within his father's background. The popularisation of particular sports, Bourdieu (1991) argued has changed the cultural capital make-up of the weekly crowds watching sports like rugby; once limited to the playing fields of England's public schools. The structural features of Mark's family were typical of the working class, their extended local family, their economic status, while his father's educational background, his sporting activity and work positions were not typical of working class culture and perhaps signal the presence of a residue of something beyond the working class 'habitus'.

- Educational progress

Mark's academic story from key stage 1 – 3 did not show a potential for high achievement. At key stage 1 he achieved the national expectation of 2b across English, mathematics and science, although this was higher than 30% of his school cohort. At the end of key stage 2 Mark achieved higher than the expected threshold in English, and was in line with national averages for mathematics but below for science. These results were again higher than the overall pattern for the school where only 50% achieved 4b and above in both English and mathematics. A similar pattern was shown at the end of key stage 3. In terms of his cognitive ability Mark's overall score (93) was in the top seven of the 14 students in the research cohort, ranging from 122 - 79. Mark's verbal and non-verbal scores were slightly higher in fifth position while quantitative score was below the average for this group at tenth position. Mark's progress from key stage 2 to key stage 4 showed added value, although predicted to achieve above average results he achieved 5 'A' grades at GCSE taking him into the national high achieving group in terms of government grouping. Mark's progression profile started in the middle range and moved up into the upper range of academic achievement; this is not in line with the findings of Feinstein (2003); children from low socio-economic status generally showed a decline in their academic achievement with increasing age. Mark's profile is not common to a child in a low socio-economic status group having greater similarity to that of the results of the higher socio-economic status group. At key stage 5 Mark's progression continued to flourish and he succeeded to gain the top A-level grades of A.A, B, which allowed him to go to Exeter University to read English and history. His desire to become a teacher, coupled with the determination to do as well as his sister, motivated him and changed his aspirations into concrete actions.

b) Key practices influencing Mark's academic success

- Language Development

Throughout Mark's childhood his family ate meals together where possible. Mark's father left early for work every morning but the remaining members of the family ate breakfast together. The evening meal eaten together provided the family time for discussion of the events of the day and current affairs. As a teenager Mark and his sister enjoyed debating topical issues with their father and mother. Mark's father had strong political views and Mark commented that he and his sister greatly enjoyed their lively debates frequently offering opposing views to their father's.

"My sister and I enjoy lively debates with our father. He has strong views on politics. The newspaper is delivered daily and my father offers many comments on many stories which add to these lively discussions. I like to read the newspaper as well being able to compare my views on story as well as my father's and the writer's. It is also interesting to see how the news differs between the papers and the television news."

Mark's views showed that he had developed a well formed understanding of the power of writing and the influence it has upon people's attitudes and values. As a teenager having the opportunity to engage with 'safe' banter with his father had aided his ability to argue a case and to formulate extended pieces of writing or analysis of literature. Mark's extended family regularly met and as a family he had the opportunity to discuss everyday matters with many adults of different generations.

"As a close family surrounded by many aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins we meet at least once a week together, at one of our homes. We also go on holiday together, especially with two of my cousins (who are similar ages to me and my sister,) and my aunt and uncle."

Mark frequently attended rugby matches with his father and engaged in detailed "after match analysis" with an extended group of his father's friends and his own peers. This wide variety of opportunities possibly provided for Mark a platform to develop his critical thinking skills and formulate well-structured arguments which would aid his later academic study.

- Reading practices within the home

An examination of the reading habits of the family show that Mark grew up in a family which had plenty of books and regularly used the local library. Mark's father regularly read to him; Mark remembered "*As a kid, before I started school Dad came home for a lunch break and he*

would read to me every day, and also in the evening he would read to me before I went to bed”.

Mark’s father liked to read and he modelled reading for pleasure. His mother did not read for pleasure as much as his father did. Having a role model for a young lad growing up aids academic success (Nash and Harker 2006); Mark’s father modelled a good reading habit for his son, which may provide some explanation for Mark’s talent and enjoyment towards English literature. Having special memories of reading together with his father would maintain a favourable attitude within Mark toward reading as he grew up. Having been subjected to a wide variety of literature from an early age would have provided Mark with an enriched body of language. In Nash and Harker’s study (2006) families with more than 100 books tended to be more professional and Mark’s father with his grammar school education and management role in work mirrored the practices observed of the professionals who read daily to their children. These children achieved higher rates of success than those without the resources or practice.

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Mark spoke warmly about how his parents saved money so that he could go on school trips and residential visits especially those abroad. His parents sacrificed their own holiday time in favour of their children, having saved hard in order that he and his sister could go on as many visits and trips as possible.

“My parents saved greatly so that my sister and I could go on school trips. We both were able to go on residential trips to France and Spain. Many of my friends could not go as it was quite a lot of money, but mum and dad wanted us to go. We did not take many holidays as a family because of this. We have been with our cousins and Dad and I have been camping locally. I also get to go on the school trips to the theatre, I really like these, books and plays we are studying just come alive. I like to join in the school plays and have had a few starring roles.”

Exposing children to a variety of new experiences gives them a greater opportunity to develop their thinking skills, applying learnt concepts to a variety of new situations, and using a more diverse bank of memories which feeds their imagination for creative writing. Ridge (2002) argued, that there are a number of benefits of school trips. Having a break from their everyday lessons with peers is seen as a treat away from their normal family life routines and provides opportunity to experience a different social environment. Ridge (2002) further stressed how much students miss out when they are unable to attend a trip, not only is the academic experience missed but the wider social experience is missed and there is a compounding

sense of being excluded. Attending a 'free' trip provided for all by the school does little to compensate for missing out on the 'costly' trips.

c) Key dispositions influencing Mark's academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Mark recognised the support that his parents gave him throughout his education. Aware of the success his sister had achieved, and how she had encouraged him to do well in school. Mark recalled an occasion when as a younger child he was being bullied by another boy and how his sister supported him by confronting this boy and warned him off. Family support within the nuclear family was significantly strong. Mark's extended family lived locally, with a number of cousins attending local schools but not achieving as well as his sister and he had done. Mark conveyed how his mother and father had stressed the importance of education more than his aunts and uncles. His parents ensured homework was completed and also added additional wider educational experiences for his sister and him with day trips to places of local interest.

"Playing in the school team for rugby and having a strong interest in sport has developed a particular competitive spirit within Mark I believe and this desire to always do his best and not to let the team down was drummed into him strongly by his father who was always a strong rugby player and lived by these ideals." (Mark's Mother)

The strong sporting attitude did appear to have had a strong influence in forming a positive attitude toward life and higher expectations of the family which have been translated into higher academic success for both Mark and his sister within the family. This observation is supported by research carried out using English state school achievement data in 2013 (Ofsted, 2014). The data showed that there was a strong correlation between the percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE, and those schools providing a strong quality of competitive sporting provision.

"Our academic success is largely due to sport, the students love it. It has helped to improve their behaviour and attitudes and their attendance has risen because sport gets them into school."

(Headteacher, page 22 Ofsted 2014 Excellence in Competitive school sport)

- Choice of school

Mark's father had attended the research school as a young lad. Being a 'strong rugby school' he wished his son to attend there also. His sister had not attended the same school but went to another local school for girls. His sister's school had a strong reputation for science which she was particularly interested in. Although his parents had relied on past reputations, they

had made active decisions to match their children with schools they believed they would do well at.

“We looked at a few of the local schools, they all had something to offer, but I think we chose correctly and they have done well, both of them. We are very proud.”

(Mark's mother)

Mark's parents had used the information available to them make decisions; they did not allow their children just to attend the local school without assessing the other options.

- Peer group

Mark's group of friends shared a love for sport and were similar in terms of general achievement, having studied in the same classes for subjects. They spent a lot of time after school in sporting activities and this formed a strong group which was driven by competition and the desire to achieve. They had a positive attitude towards their teachers and enjoyed school. Mark had a desire to be a PE teacher but was aware that although he enjoyed sport and was reasonably good the competition would be tough; instead he selected English to study at university. He wished to become a secondary school teacher teaching either PE or English. His friends were also thinking about attending university. Peer pressure can have both positive and negative effects upon young people since it plays a key role in the formulation of a person's self-identity (Ridge, 2006). Mark had a highly competitive group of friends dominated by a culture of sport, led to a positive pro-school self-identity for the group aiding his educational success.

- School

Mark attended the local primary school. One of his teachers made his mother and father aware that he, like his sister was bright and should do well in education.

“One primary school teacher spoke to me when his sister (who is three year's older than mark) was in the upper primary, stating that we should ensure we encouraged her to complete her GCSEs and A-levels and go on to university. The school continued to encourage us and stressed how bright our daughter was. When Mark was in the upper primary they told us a similar thing. For our daughter, science and mathematics were her strongest subjects while for Mark he is more creative with English literature, drama and sports dominating.”

(Mark's mother)

Having been made aware that their children had the potential to do well, Mark's parents were determined to encourage his sister and him to achieve at school, knowing that they could be the first in their family to go to university. Mark's active involvement in the sports of rugby and

cricket meant that his father, when work commitments allowed, would attend school matches to support his son. This added to the positive attitude Mark had towards school life and also developed firm relationships between himself, his father and the school teachers. This provided for Mark a unified message, from all key adults, of the value of a good education. His parents also saved so he would be able to attend a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and school visits. Mark valued these experiences and believed that his love of literature and his wider world view were a result of these opportunities. Mark's parents believed that studying for a degree would open up to their children a wide variety of jobs or professions which would enrich their life opportunities. Mark's parents held all professionals in very high esteem. Having been given advice by Mark's teacher they had no reason to doubt that this professional would be wrong. This created a strong drive for his parents not to let their children down.

- Future career and higher educational choices

Mark worked hard for his A-level examinations being highly motivated after his visits to a number of university campuses for interviews. He was very keen to go to Exeter and knew that he must get the grades if this was to happen. He was aware of the life style enjoyed by his sister and wished to have a similar experience. He was also very aware that his own parents had left school at 16 and never had the opportunity to attend university, he was well aware of their desire for things to be different for himself and his sister.

Although Mark had a passion for physical education he had thought carefully about his selection of subjects to study at university making sure he would be able to secure a place at a good university and have a number of options available to him when he stated his teaching career, selecting to study English and history, core subjects and within the English Baccalaureate, enabling him a wide choice of teaching posts in the future and the ability to offer rugby and cricket as an extra-curricular activity. *"I would like to study PE but I think I will do English and history as this is a better option for me."*

Mark was fairly open about where he would live in the future and did not see distance from his family as an issue. Although close to his family he was looking to study at a good university, and find a job that met his current needs rather than selecting somewhere that was right on the family door step.

"I don't really mind, where ever I can get a good job. It's easy to travel so I don't need to be that close to my family. I would like my own home, but as long as it nice and comfortable I don't really mind."

Mark's parents had established within the family a close bond but one which also was flexible and allowed them to see the benefit of greater mobility when selecting future careers or

university. The rest of his extended family had left school at the end of secondary education and chosen to work locally, and to live with or close to family. Mark's parents had made it clear to him and his sister that in order to have a greater level of opportunities they both needed to experience the world beyond the estate, but that did not mean they turned their backs on their family. Having greater mobility did not mean that the family became distant but shared experiences in new and different ways.

d) Concluding points

Looking at the overall story for Mark we see that some key elements for achievement within the educational world were in place. Similar to the conclusions drawn by Jackson and Marsden (1962), Bourdieu (1991) and Reay (2001), Mark's story shows enabling factors for social mobility. Mark's story identified characteristics of upper working class; although situated within a framework which aligned itself to the 'white working class', (having a local extended family deeply rooted in the locality, socio-economically within the semi-skilled/manual category, locally educated, and in the moderate means income grouping), his family showed practices and dispositions beyond those traditionally observed within this group. Mark's father although leaving school at 16 did leave with some qualifications and had a work ethic which moved beyond that of working to provide just money. He saw skills acquisition as a way to improve one's life chances. Having been in the navy and seen a 'wider world', he felt it important to impress these values upon this family.

Mark showed in primary school to be of average intelligence (according to his key stage 1 and 2 results) but had progressed through his secondary education more in line with those traditionally from a higher socio-economic grouping (Feinstein, 2003). There was evidence of pedagogic effort on behalf of Mark's family. Practices within the home worked together with those of the school which created success, and fuelled aspirations for continued academic success into higher education. The presence of books and a father who read with him as a young lad had provided a strong role model for Mark. The family structure where they ate together, developing confidence in verbal communication, and spending time together on day trips had set education into a wider context for him. The strong peer group support with a heavy sporting competitive strand which added to this drive to be the best he could be was also evident.

Finally, of note is the emphasis placed by Mark's mother and father on the importance of education; Mark was aware of the self-sacrifice of his parents as they saved, to send him and his sister on expensive school trips and the reality of a university education being made possible. Bourdieu (1991) and Kupfer (2015) identified consciousness as a catalyst for change. Members of the family see that they are 'trapped' within their habitus by their lack of

education and become motivated to engage fully in the educational system in order to move beyond their current habitus. Mark's parents both supported him with his career choices and encouraged him to achieve this aspiration by achieving academic success. (Jackson and Marsden 1962)

Working in partnership with the school and sporting coaches, and adding value to the foundations laid by his home life, Mark through his engagement in school sports, drama productions, and school visits was able to fully embrace academic life. The strong school ethos of inspiring the students to achieve, and to realising this message through the actions of promoting high academic attainment and entry into Russell Group universities was not wasted upon Mark. Having a highly competitive group of friends who also bought into the ethos, driven by their desire to play competitive sports, encouraged Mark to embrace education, accumulate new cultural capital and secure for himself the qualifications required to access a top English university and to become a teacher. Having a sister who had made the step into university education before him had provided a guide, and an element of competition which inspired him to achieve.

Ashlee's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a, 2b, 2a
Key stage 2 results	4a,4a, 4a,
Key stage 3 results	6a,6b,6a
Key stage 4 Results	8xA, 2xB
Key stage 5 Results	A,A,D
University/training post 18	Gloucestershire
CATS Score Mean SAS	94
CATS Score Mean verbal	102
CATS Score Mean Quantative	102
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	96

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	CSE/RSA
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	No
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on decisions made related to higher education or career	Uncle/Friends
Homework	at home
attendance at school	98%
Career aspiration	Police

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Office/semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.41
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Owner-occupied
Family Size	1+3
Position in siblings	1st
Parental status	Divorced
local extended family	Grandparents

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	encouragement
Relationship to staff	strong Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Uncle
Parents read to them	Mother
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	No
Eat as a family	Yes
Holidays/ Days out	Yes

a. Structures

- Family Structures

Ashlee was the eldest daughter within a family of three children. Her parents were divorced, and her father had been remarried for a number of years. Ashlee had a younger sister and brother and a half-sister, who lived with her father. The extended family lived on the estate and within the local town. The family was classed economically as 'hard pressed' mainly due to the single parent status of her mother and the manual status of Ashlee's father occupation, which added a little to the upkeep of the family.

- Family background

Ashlee's parents were both educated up to the age of 16 gaining CSEs and RSAs. Her mother attended the same school as Ashlee. The school was then a secondary modern school and so did not enter students for 'O' levels. The school (two years before her mother was 16) had included a sixth form and a grammar form stream, which her uncle had attended and taken 'A' levels. He left the school and gained an apprenticeship. His firm sent him to Reading University. Ashlee's uncle had been very successful and lived and worked in Switzerland. Ashlee's mother (in contrast) left school and joined a Youth Training Scheme course, completed a BTEC in office practice, and studied shorthand at evening school.

Ashlee's father was adopted and an only child, doted on by Ashlee's grandparents. He was working in a local car hire company when he met and married Ashlee's mother and later moved into a local print works where he continued to work as a print finisher. Ashlee's family showed structural characteristics of the working class. Surrounded by an extended family, who lived locally, and had deep family roots in the local community. Both parents had limited education and worked locally in low paid, semi-skilled jobs.

- Educational progress

The academic profile for Ashlee in her early educational career gives few clues to the later pattern achieved in key stage 3 and 4. Throughout key stage 1 and 2 she showed herself to be only slightly above average, achieving 4a scores at the end of key stage 2 rather than 4b. This marginal difference did not predict the achievement she was to make by the end of key stage 4; although her overall achievement was not totally sustained into key stage 5, as one of her A-level grades (Biology) results was a D grade compared to the other two A grades achieved. Her choice of university appeared to have been driven a desire to remain close to home, selecting a local, lower ranking university. She exceeded the grades she required for her choice, but continued with this selected and moved to the University of Gloucestershire to study criminology, looking to have a career in the police force.

a) Key practices influencing Ashlee's academic success

- Language development

Spending time together as a family, developing the skills of conversation, can more easily be secured when a family eats together daily around a table. Developing social skills as well as discussing relevant issues gives a young person a safe environment to expand vocabulary and the acquisition of literacy skills (Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998). Ashlee did not sit together with her family at meal times around a table, as they have never had a dining room table and chairs, they ate their meals on trays and they sometimes sat together in the living room, watching television and talking. It was Sunday lunch when the family was normally all together for their meal. Ashlee's mother stressed how important to her this time together was, because as a child her mother had never cooked a traditional British Sunday lunch, instead they had a cheese sandwich. Ashlee's grandmother would take her mother to her grandparents; her mother's grandfather would play games with her uncle and mother, while the grandmother cooked. Ashlee's mother remembered how she had played hoop rings and how this had helped her to learn to count. She also remembered making bread with her grandmother as well. She stressed how important therefore it was for her own children to have a positive experience with the family and how this added to her own children's educational success. Following the practices that have formed a person's own up-bringing Bourdieu (1986) argued, is characteristic of working class practices creating their 'habitus'.

- Reading practices within the home

Ashlee felt that her success in education had been due to the strong support from her family network; having a home where she was happy to go home to every day with the knowledge of a loving family who had the same ambitions as she did. The home did not particularly have the educational resources some families had. Ashlee had around 20 books within the home. The majority of these were text books or those related to school work, only a few were fiction books. Ashlee had always read well since starting primary school. This love of reading was fostered every Sunday lunchtime, while Ashlee was growing up, by her extended family. They would meet at the local club and her uncle and aunt would sit reading, while the adults talked; Ashlee would be read to by them. Her parents did model reading, not every day but regularly enough to have a positive impact on her behaviour. Her mother read the newspaper and sporting magazines which she read cover to cover. Together they read stories at bedtime. Her mother daily sat with her and talked about school. As a young child, Ashlee read her reading books with her mother and frequently they completed homework together. Due to the lack of resources within the home her mother took her to their local library. Her mother expressed how much she did enjoy going to the library together with her daughter, "*I enjoyed doing this*

with my dad when I was young, we had some great time together dad and I at the library, and I loved doing this with Ashlee."

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Having a wider experience of the world aids a child's learning. Children from low income families do struggle to gain full access to the wider world, especially first-hand knowledge. For a family going through difficult times, taking holidays can be very important and these, where possible, were saved for and favourite locations found. Ashlee described her holiday experiences, *"We have been to Florida for the past three years, and before that we went on holiday in England every year as far back as I can remember! We would always do activities together on holiday usually pre planned ones like going to theme parks and water parks."* Ashlee's mother saw holidays as important family times creating memories. This desire for family leisure time was matched by the locations visited and activities selected. Leisure, rather than educational benefit, was the purpose of the family holiday.

b) Key dispositions influencing Ashlee's academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Ashlee's mother explained that she had always wanted a better life for her children than she had, *"I just am driven by ensuring that life is better for her. I did not wish her to grow up in a house which was not supportive and her having to stay behind at school to work."* Her mother, reflecting on her own background, stressed that she believed that parents are driven by a desire to right a wrong, which they perceived in their own childhood. This desire was highlighted by a further injustice felt by her mother. She felt that she had not had the same opportunities available to her as her brother. In addition to this, she was cross about the attitude Ashlee's father had towards money and his family. Ashlee's mother stated, a factor that motivated her to ensure her children did well at school and in life was her divorce from Ashlee's father.

"Paul had been adopted he always had everything from his parents, where as I was one of four. Dad brought home the money and it all had to be split, as well as putting up with all the problems mum caused. I learnt well from my Dad; my mum had misused the money and got our family into problems. Paul got money from his parents all the time, and he carried on as he wanted, he was not paying the bills and we were going into debt. I was not going through all that again. Ashlee was 18 months old when I threw Paul out."

Added to the determination of Ashlee's mother for her children to succeed in life was a confirmation given to Ashlee as she started year 7, when her Head of Year told her and her mother at her first parent's evening, that Ashlee should "work hard and make her dreams come

true". Ashlee's teacher showed a great belief in her. Her mother said. This provided the encouragement to study as well as the strong desire not to disappoint her teacher.

The effect of divorce or separation on a child's educational progression is greatly debated. Being the child of divorced parents does not appear from this research to prevent educational success. Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998 stated, that children are more likely to succeed in education if they have the support of two parents within the home. While Brown and Lauder (2009) argued that the effect of changing family structure due to divorce or separation upon a child's educational success is low, and the relationship is with the economic impact of the new situation created rather than the divorce itself. Research has shown that lone families are amongst the poorest social groups and specifically lone mothers (Rowlingson and McKay, 1998). British government policy has encouraged lone parents back into work by supporting additional child care funding. However, Ofsted inspections show that 47% of child care in deprived areas requires improvement. Lone parents, with low qualifications, also find access to the higher paid jobs difficult, especially, if their own deprived background has led to poor qualifications and so they remain trapped within poverty and low educational success. Parental divorce, Palosan and Aro (1994) state, does cause both short term and long term effects and few children remain unscarred by the event. Ashlee had not appeared to have suffered any trauma linked to her parents' divorce, due to being very young when it occurred, although she had juggled the effect of being parented in isolation by her divorced parents.

- Choice of school

Ashlee did not attend nursery or playgroup, but started school aged five at the local primary school. Ashlee wished to attend the local community secondary school where her friends also wished to go. Although her mother knew that the school had been through some very difficult times, she believed that with a new senior leadership team the school would improve. Wishing for her daughter to be happy, she decided to send Ashlee to the school she wanted to attend. Ashlee conveyed that she knew at an early age that she wished to go on to higher education and knew that doing well at school would enable her to go to college and subsequently onto university. Ashlee wished to go to a local university and study criminology. She believed that she was influenced by her friends and school to attend university. Wishing to go into the police and specialise within particular areas of criminology, she explained how studying this degree would really help her. Ashlee's mother believed her daughter's love for criminology had developed from the stories her Grandfather used to tell her about when he visited his brother in Broadmoor Prison. Ashlee loved to listen how her grandfather had once, in the visitors' room, sat next to Paul Sutcliffe. Her grandfather vividly described the actions of Sutcliffe and how, when sat with him in that room, he saw that a murderer could also be a nice man. Ashlee's mother described how her grandfather had stressed to Ashlee the need to look

beyond the crimes committed and to look at the whole person who had been sat with him. Ashlee and her mother liked to watch all the crime dramas on television and together they shared a passion for criminology.

“I definitely think that is what I would have liked to have done, so if Ashlee goes into this line of work I will have partly succeeded. We are so proud of her and so enthusiastic for her to continue to do well. I am always just proud of what she does achieve I just want her to do her best.”

- Peer group

Assessing who had the greatest influence on her educational success Ashlee acknowledged the influence of her mother.

“The fact my mum and Dad work so hard I wanted to make them proud by doing well, especially my mum because of the difficult time that we’ve been through. Also I will be the only person in my family to go to university since my uncle who is now 47, so I am working towards that goal.”

Her friends had played a critical role as well, but this had been far more mutual, as they all were succeeding and working together to achieve shared goals. They often did their homework together and helped each other to revise; *“we always encouraged each other to do well as school was very important to us all.”* Ashlee’s mother added how competitive the group of friends had been throughout their schooling, which she stressed added to their success. Any one of the group failing would mean the entire group failed, as they missed their shared goals.

When the students entered the secondary school, they moved from being in a mixed ability set into levelled groups according to ability. Within the primary school, the students worked in mixed ability classes where classwork was differentiated and students worked in small ability groups in the class. There was an awareness already of who was ‘clever’ and who not (Reay, 2006b) but at this stage being in the same class, this was less of a dividing factor. At age 11, when the students entered the secondary school, this division had a more dramatic effect and the sets for particular subjects meant that students were divided and spent the majority of time with students of similar ability. The sets created in their own right a hierarchical system and enforced a pseudo-class societal structure upon the year group and within the micro society of the school. Teachers favoured teaching the top groups and relationships between these sets and their teachers were in many ways different to those of the lower ability sets. Once in the top set, the competition element between students helped to drive achievement, but also created invisible barriers around these groups. This element of school class competition mirrored the structured class placing found in some more traditional public schools and

fostered a culture built on power and status. In a school fighting to improve attainment beyond the government set base lines, these students with greater potential for academic success were well looked after and given 'power and status'; taught frequently by the most experienced teachers, in the best classrooms this created a sense of elitism. Due to the overall low attainment of the school cohort when compared nationally these students entering the top sets on entry into the school were not exceptional academics but were given 'status' by the school system and thus developed a highly competitive spirit, which drove an ability to achieve and move on academically securing their places within these classes and giving them status and power. Ashlee's friends were aware of the added privileges gained and worked hard together to remain the 'chosen' few.

- School

Ashlee was quite critical of the school. She acknowledged the positive influence that some key teachers had upon her, and that having visited some local universities this had given her a better knowledge of what courses were available and where she wanted to go. However, she was pleased that she had moved to the local sixth form college to study for her A-levels although her mother had sought help for her from one of her past teachers when she was struggling with her biology. When asked about the impact that the school had on her, she spoke vehemently about how she perceived students were treated.

[The school needs to] "pay more attention to students that actually follow the rules and [they need to] recognise their achievements as being big ones rather than praising students for smaller things like for example just showing up to school or going to lessons, which are presumably the bare minimum and the things that are required of you by just being at school."

Ashlee's mother spoke about how disappointed Ashlee had been at prize-giving when the Head Teacher's prize had been awarded to someone she felt was undeserving of it, and how many prizes were awarded for attendance, or that students gained merit marks in lower sets for being well behaved, while those in the higher sets had to do much more to gain the same reward. The school had developed a culture of rewarding effort and progress, while perhaps misjudging the efforts and struggles of those who consistently had worked hard and achieved well. Trying hard to encourage the 60%, who were underachieving, they had missed the journeyed travelled by the 40%, who also came from a similar background and needed the recognition as well.

- Future career and higher educational choices

Ashlee believed she would succeed in the future and fulfil her ambitions. She wished to be in a job that made her happy, even if it is not in her chosen subject of criminology. She also saw herself living in a city like Bristol, not as large as London but still vibrant, living in a two-bedroomed flat or house with a partner.

“I am aiming to live in a city like Bristol or Reading when I graduate, but not a huge city like London, as I will probably be living with my boyfriend ideally a one or two bedroomed flat, house if we can afford it!”

c) Concluding points

Ashlee’s story illustrates a closely located family born and bred on the estate over a number of generations, who generally have a lack of educational qualifications, and work locally in manual/semi-skilled jobs. Ashlee’s mother illustrates a mother’s attitude toward her child to find a better life for her. The conscious rejection of her mother’s social milieu of origin acted as a catalyst for change (Kupfer, 2015). Ashlee’s mother was inspired by the success of her brother (Ashlee’s uncle), alongside a determination to right the wrongs she felt had been dealt to her by her own mother (Ashlee’s grandmother), her previous husband (Ashlee’s father) and the secondary modern education system which she felt had failed her and had not allowed her to complete her qualifications. There are similarities here to Mark, but Mark’s father had a personal struggle early in his life and was determined to better his own life and that of his children, but not with a feeling of righting wrongs; he had seen the life beyond the estate in his time with the navy and wanted his own family to be able to experience this.

Both Ashlee and Mark were told that they would be able to succeed academically, when they were in late primary and early secondary school, by a teacher who their parents trusted and this added to their belief that a positive future was possible (Pedagogic effort, Kupfer 2015).

Mark had strong role models from both his father and his sister, while for Ashlee it was her Grandfather and an uncle. This reflects the different family structures of Mark and Ashlee; Mark lived in a close nuclear family and was the youngest of the children, while Ashlee living with her mother and sister, as the eldest child had a closer relationship with her Grandfather and uncle.

Although Ashlee had been successful, she had also been disadvantaged by not having been to nursery school and by her limited resources within the home, which influenced reading practices and social conversation at meals. Her mother, although helping her greatly with homework, did not role model reading in the same way as Mark’s father had done for him.

Ashlee's mother had the same strong desire for education as Mark's parents. In contrast to Mark, Ashlee's holidays had been taken overseas courtesy of her uncle and had a leisure focus rather than an educational one. The role and influence of Ashlee's peers, and the relationships with her teachers, had been strong motivating factors supporting her achievement.

Grace's Story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a,2a,3
Key stage 2 results	5,5,5
Key stage 3 results	6a,6a,7a
Key stage 4 Results	8 x A*, 2 x A
Key stage 5 Results	B,C,C.
University/Training	Deferred place, Queen Mary's London
CATS Score Mean SAS	93
CATS Score Mean verbal	107
CATS Score Mean Quantative	99
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	102
Jesson Rating	High
Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Manual
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard Pressed
IDACI	0.317
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	1st
Parental status	Married
local extended family	No

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	GCSEs/A Levels
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	yes
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	Father
Homework	In School, after school
attendance at school	98%
Career aspiration	Medicine

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Encouragement
Relationship to staff	Strong Influence
Relationship to Peers	Strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Cousin
Parents read to them	No
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	No
Eat as a family	Weekends
Holidays/ Days out	Yes Days out

a) Structures

- Family Structure

Grace was the eldest child in a family of four; her brother was three years younger than her and attended the same school. Her father and mother were married and they had lived in the catchment area since Grace joined the school in year 8. Grace's father was a chef, but had injured his hand. This prevented him from continuing to work as a chef and he had taken a job as a security guard for a local firm. His hand had recovered and he hoped to return to work as a chef at some point in the future. Grace's mother had worked in a series of manual jobs before arriving in the local area, and was employed as a cleaner. The family were classed economically as 'hard pressed' due to the low pay of their manual employment.

- Family background

Grace's parents both had achieved some level of academic success before leaving school at 16 (mother) and 18 (father). Her father gained A-levels and her mother achieved a few GCSEs. Grace's childhood illustrated the early struggles some working class children experience; her parents balanced the need to train and gain economic stability with bringing up a child.

"When I was born Mum and Dad moved away to find work because my Dad was not trained as a chef at this time and it was difficult to get work. It was very difficult for them for a few years so I lived with my grandparents. I did not see my parents at all at this time as they lived a long way away and worked very long hours. My little brother was born while they were working away, but I remained with my grandparents and did not go to live with my parents until they moved back when I was eight.

I was in year 4 when I joined mum and dad. We moved about a lot still, and I did year 5 in a different school when we moved to London and stayed there for a bit and I started year 6 in Woking, and then we moved again to Reading where I did year 7 and then we moved to [this town] and I joined year 8."

For Grace her early childhood was a struggle with attachment issues related to her mother and father. She had lived with her grandparents from birth. Grace had verbal contact with them regularly, but did not have physical contact with them until the age of eight years. However, at this age she moved away from her grandparents and returned to the care of her parents. This massive life style change was accompanied with a period of great mobility which would have had a major impact upon her stability in school based learning. The issues of the discontinuity of: taught subject content between schools, frequent changes to her peer groups and her teachers, and the differing school climates, all increased her risk factors for poor educational

achievement (Temple and Reynolds, 1999). However, in contrast what could have been a negative risk factor appeared to have built a high level of internal resilience and a drive to achieve for Grace.

- Educational Progress

Grace achieved the highest GCSE results for this research cohort and her academic school year. Her key stage 1 results although strong were not top but equal second, with three other students in the research group. By the end of key stage 2 and 3 her overall grades place her however, in the top rank of the research cohort. Her key stage 3 results show exceptional progress in science gaining her a level 7a well ahead of the others in the research group. She also gained the highest grades in mathematics and English at level 6a. Her strong key stage 4 results were not converted into equally strong key stage 5 results (B,C,C). Although she was able to secure a place at university, she deferred this and instead gained some hospital based experience before returning to study. Grace had been unable to gain a place to study medicine with these grades.

a) Key practices influencing Grace's academic success

- Language development

Grace's parents, like many other working class parents, daily worked many hours and meals times were only shared during weekends. Due to the limited amount of contact time Grace had with her parents at home the opportunities for her language development were restricted within the home situation (Walker, Greenwood, Hart and Carta, 1994). The school environment compensated for the lack of opportunities for development of language within the home. Grace took an active role on the school council, the debating society and within community action projects. These clubs helped her to develop skills, which provided a strong platform for her at the age of 16 to stand and to be elected as the local youth parliament member.

- Reading practices within the home

Practices within the home for Grace were not characteristic of those which add great value to academic success (Hattie, 2009). Grace received little to no formal learning within the home at an early age (Evans, 2006) from her grandparents. The lack of a highly stimulating environment within Grace's early years showed how marked her 'turning point' was at the age of eight when she returned to live with her parents. Having a cognitively stimulating learning environment up to the age of eight years old has been shown to foster educational success (Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998; Tenebaum, 2007). Educational resources within both Grace's grandparents' and parents' home were limited (Nash & Harker, 2006). However, by

using the local and school libraries Grace had access to wide variety of books and she read extensively, supported by her brother and father.

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Grace and her family did take many day trips to museums and exhibitions. Her father had been influential in these events which provided a wider 'world experience' as well as enriching her creative mind, enhancing her language development in the imaginative/creative writing sphere (Rees, 1968). These wider experiences she drew on to provide examples for her studies generally but where particularly evidenced in her history class, and her English Language and Literature GCSEs, as well as providing greater understanding of her world, which was reflected in her debating skills.

Her academic start in life was further hindered by her grandparents being unable to read and her non-attendance at any nursery or toddler group in her pre-school years. Grace also showed some resentment about her brother being able to live with her parents from birth, while she still remained with her grandparents and how, as she saw it, this had made her father more proud of her brother and how her brother found his educational studies far easier than she did.

"I cannot call myself really talented I think I am a little bit insecure because my brother he is so intelligent, he knows more than me. He has a really sharp brain, I get really embarrassed when I am with him and Dad, and because he has been with them ever since he was born obviously he got more chances. Since he was like six or seven years old he has known all his timetables up to 20. I did not know mine up to 12 times, so I would think oh no he is so smart, he is going to do so much better than me in life. Even now he knows all the capital cities of the world. Dad quizzes me and him and I am like Dad I really don't want to do this quiz. He would ask why – [I would think] because you are trying to compare me with him and he is so clever, and so I feel so embarrassed when I am around him. I feel I am meant to be older than him and feel so challenged because he knows so much more than me and I get really scared."

b) Key dispositions influencing Grace's academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

The influence of Grace's father had been a dominant factor since the age of nine when she returned to live with her parents. Grace stressed the fact that her father strongly re-enforced the importance of education to her. For many of the other students in this research cohort their mother had been the dominant parent in their life, which is in line with a more traditional working class habitus (Young & Willmott, 1957). What emerged for Grace was an individual

habitus, influenced by her parents, and their struggle against the lack of economic capital. What emerged was a highly individualistic attitude divorced from the 'norm' of the local community. Grace and her family appeared different, they had travelled greatly in search of work which perhaps manifested itself as strong intrinsic motivation within Grace to do well, both to please her father and to be accepted. Bourdieu (1986) argued that one form of capital could be converted into another form. Grace's father demonstrated how his emotional involvement with his daughter's education and Grace's emotional investment in what was offered generated emotional capital, which in its embodied form was the development of competence achieved through learning and required much time in personal study. This embodied form then would be rewarded in the institutionalized form of the capital in the award of academic certificates. This institutionalized form of emotional capital could then be converted in academic and social capital. Arguably, the key to this conversion was Grace's understanding that in order to improve she must become educated, which would result in a likely move away from the local community, a community with low social and economic capital.

"At one point when I was young I thought why does he keep going on and on. Even when we went on holiday; even as a little child I used to think holidays are meant to be fun. We went on holidays and Dad would say like 'take a book', and say I should take a revision guide with me, but now when we go on holiday he does not need to tell me, as it is me packing the books and he is like... don't take your books with you and we always argue and I say I want to study...Before I leave for school every day, as I step out of the door you can hear him shouting this "Make sure you do well at school, work hard, pay attention." When I come home from school it's, "What did you do at school? Come and tell me everything." Although he does not really understand the work, he is still interested."

Grace showed a mixture of emotions; a deep desire to know she was truly accepted and the need to know that her father was truly proud of her. Having grown up away from her parents, she had a need to know she was fully part of the family. Her relationship with her mother lay on a different plane to that she was building with her father. Her mother's position, based on a lower academic background and a lack of career did not have the same marks of struggle and desire to live out her own aspirations through her children.

"Mum [helps me] as well, she is not as academic as Dad but she is like, [influential] in an emotional kind of way. Mum is like always been my barrier, she doesn't really judge me or anything."

Grace's mother provided emotional stability for her daughter, which complemented the emotional support provided by her father. Bourdieu's work (1986), stated the important role played by the mother within the family reproducing the family's cultural capital. He did not speak directly of emotional capital but recognised the mother as the central carer within a family unit and her involvement in the generation of cultural capital. Goleman (1996) has shown that emotional intelligence can be used by a person within the economic world which generates economic capital, a demonstration of how emotional capital converts to economic capital gains. Making sure Grace was accepted by her father was a driving force in her academic success, although she was unable to verbalise fully her strong emotions. This desire was shown to be stronger by the 'chance' meeting of her cousin and the influence of an inspirational film she mentioned. The desire to please her father, and to be accepted in the same way as she perceived her brother was accepted, had a critical impact upon her.

"...at first Dad had doubts in me, like before I got my GCSE grades, he did not think that I would have done well, but after I got the grades he was like 'great, well done'...Dad is like the type of person who would never show he is proud. He is not the type of person who would hug you and say 'oh well done honey you did really well'. He would try hiding it and outside he would seem like a really strict person but you can see when you look into his eyes that he is proud of you...He was very proud of me when I opened my [GCSE] results."

Although having had a tough start to life, Grace was a pretty determined student and from year 9 she was keen to go to university, hopefully Oxford or Cambridge, and wanted a career in medicine, *"I want to be a surgeon. I'm still looking into what kind of surgeon I want to be. I think I want to be a plastic surgeon."* Grace was very aware of a moment in her life, her key 'changing' point, from feeling disinterested in academic work, to wanting to work hard, to really making a difference in the world and her life.

"When I went to live with my parents at first I was not all that focused, but when we moved to London I met my cousin who was at Bristol University training to be a doctor, she was just graduating and she was going to live in Bristol. I went to visit her in Bristol and she really inspired me so much, and I wanted to be a doctor as well. I promised myself that I was going to work hard that I would be better than her one day. This experience was really important to me and the fact that she was a woman. I don't think it would have been the same if she was not a woman doctor."

Although Grace spoke of her family having low paid manual jobs, the presence of her cousin who had achieved academically and professionally posed the question of whether there was

the presence somewhere of a submerged middle class in her wider family. The cousin was able to demonstrate the pathway forward, manifesting within the family the submerged capital aligned to the middle class. Grace's wish to be a doctor was further enhanced by a movie she watched after meeting her cousin:

"I watched a movie with Mum and dad about a young child who had Prengira It was so emotional that once the movie stopped I went to my lap top to research it. I realised that it was very rare and people who have it only live until late teens, 18 or 19. It really inspired me to help those people because I don't think, because it is such a rare disorder that there has really been much research into it. I think because scientists think it is not affecting too many people unlike cancer which has so much research this does not. I want to go to Cambridge and I want to get to help to find the cure for Prengira."

The academic progress seen in key stages 3 and 4 provides insight into how Grace had been truly driven by the role model of her cousin and the desire to find a cure for Prengira. At the age of nine, she had created for herself a very clear plan, to do well at school, to go to university and study to be a doctor and then to find a cure for a rare disorder. The experience of meeting with a family member who greatly inspired and created a role model, coupled by the inspirational film had provided for Grace a 'turning point' (Fergusson, Horwood, Boden, 2008) within her life.

- Choice of school

The choice of school for Grace had always been linked to her father's employment, and as the family moved to the local estate from Reading, the provision of a house close to his place of work was the critical location factor. Selection of school came from the availability of school places as Grace had joined mid-term. Due to the fact that the research school had been through a long period of 'troubled times', the school was one of the few within the town with available spaces, and being the most accessible school for Grace and her brother it became the natural choice.

- Peer group

Grace spoke passionately about the influence of her friends upon her academic success. Friendship development within children is an importance aspect of their social capital, and can act as 'social glue' binding one into the social structure. (Jerome, 1984) Friends provide support and can be confidants, while also averting the dangers of loneliness and social isolation (Ridge, 2006), aspects which children from more deprived backgrounds where parents work long hours, can often find themselves within. Friendships also add competition,

mirroring the success or perceived success of your friends as one strives to remain part of that selected group (Evans, 2006).

“[My Friendships are] a very important part. If I did not have Ricky, then I do not think I would have been as successful as I am now. When I am at home and not really wanting to do anything, sitting there watching the Disney channel and I think Ricky, he will be working, so I get up, turn off the TV and then study. Sometimes my parents have a go at me that this is all I do, stay in my bedroom and cram and study so they get worried about me at times but my friends are not just into education, they are laid back, we have fun together. With Ricky we can do school stuff but we also gossip so much, like two old people! You need people who give you balance.”

Working within the school environment with her friends had been important to Grace. The school provided after school classes, a library homework club, and access to computer facilities to assist students who had limited access to these resources at home. The school remained vibrant with student life well beyond the normal school day. A new friendship developed for Grace in year 10 during a science lesson when her teacher moved a disenchanted student to sit next to her. Gradually the student came to respect Grace and asked how she did so well. Grace mentioned that she did her homework after school with some other students and asked whether the student would like to join them. They both acknowledged that their home lives were not conducive to study in, and with this shared ground Leanne joined Grace and started to study hard and a friendship developed.

“...we stayed back after school every day and I like became her teacher. It was good as she challenged me, she would say “hang on how does that work, how did you get that”. It challenged me, so I tried to find out answers for her and for myself and that way we both learnt more. This friendship has been a great motivator.”

- School

Grace described school as a second home, a place where she felt safe, safer than she did at home because the school environment provided for her a place to work, which motivated her while also providing the resources she required and the support she needed. For many working class children the early academies programme was a factor in their educational success. The programme provided new school buildings, which formed part of a regeneration of the local area both in terms of the physical environment and by providing an educational environment which was more conducive to learning. In 1998, Ofsted found that five times as

many schools in deprived communities were in special measures compared to the rest of the country. A strong relationship still remains between deprivation and poorer provision; 71% of schools serving the most advantaged pupils were graded good or outstanding by Ofsted in 2010 compared to 46% serving the least advantaged communities (Ofsted, 2010). Having an improved school environment provided for Grace an environment which was not overcrowded, was warm and well resourced. Grace said that having a school building that was for their estate, said to them, 'this is for you, you are worth it,' and created an environment of safety where her needs were met and she was able to thrive academically.

Added to the environment was the quality of the teachers. Having an 'excellent' teacher compared to a 'poor' one can impact the progress of a student of more than one GCSE grade per subject (Sutton Trust, 2011). For 'failing' schools, or schools in deprived communities, recruiting high quality teachers can be an issue which compounds the inequality of educational opportunity for children living in deprived communities.

"...the teachers definitely helped me. I don't know what I would have done without my teachers. Not just my class teachers but those around school they are also always encouraging us, it is really helpful when you can speak to teachers and they treat you, well more like a friend than just another student. They encourage us to go to university, to do well, work hard for these two years and the rest of your life will be made for you...It is like the teachers are my friends and I feel safer here than at home in a way because I can work harder here than at home because when I am at school I have teachers that are constantly motivating me, telling me I can get there and even the teachers that don't teach me even a smile can make a difference... When I am walking round school and I would see the Head and the Deputy as they were walking around the corridors, and they would say 'hello, how are you, are your lessons ok?' Even that would make such a difference to a student's life because you feel, oh my God even the Head Teacher really cares about me. They have got thousands of students to look after but they personally come to me and ask me how I am. I really feel cared for and that motivates me so much."

Having had a well-resourced learning environment, teachers that taught well and showed that they cared for personal success in life, these were key factors to the academic success of Grace. In order to overcome the poverty that some students find themselves disadvantaged by, the school acted to compensate for this by having longer opening hours, offering breakfast and study space in the early morning, and providing homework clubs or extra-curricular activities after school (Posner & Vandell, 1994).

Future career and Higher education choices

Aim Higher was an educational programme that started in 2004 and helped students from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience university life. The research school engaged with this programme and at the end of year 10 Grace visited Cambridge University. *“Before this I was keen to go to Oxford or Cambridge, but this made it real and I now think I can really go. I have had a one track mind since then to go.”* Although Grace had expressed a strong desire to attend university in year 9, this programme further aided her belief that it was possible, her parents were also supported by this programme helping them to understand university finances. The programme was closed in 2011 as part of the new coalition government’s spending cuts and the introduction of the pupil premium funding. The research school was also part of a ‘twinning’ programme. At the point of conversion to an academy, the school had been partnered with one of the country’s top public schools. Students from the research school spent a day twice a year attending the public school, being part of the ‘Gifted and Talented’ programme of lectures and workshops, as well as the public school providing mentors for key students through the university application system. Grace had engaged with both programmes since year 10.

c) Concluding points

The comparison markers for Grace and the other students lay in their similar social status, and coming from families where parents had some but not extensive educational qualifications. They all lived in the heart of the estate, and had parents who although employed did not bring home a wage that allowed for ‘extras’ in life. Mark’s father had fought early struggles in life, and was ambitious for Mark, while Ashlee had the experience of her parents’ divorce and being brought up by a single parent. Grace was brought up by her grandparents and estranged from her parents and brother. Grace, Mark and Ashlee, through these experiences developed resilience, which was required to prevent the possible downward spiral into underachievement. Their stories identified the catalyst for change in their habitus of consciousness, and pedagogic effort (Bourdieu, 1991 and Kupfer 2015).

Grace also experienced a ‘turning point’ at the age of eight when she re-joined her family, met a cousin who acted as a role model for her and was greatly inspired to change the world by a film maker. This type of point of change was described by Bourdieu (1991) and Kupfer (2015) as ‘No actualization of habitus’; the structure of the family remains the same but the meaning changes due to living conditions, personal experiences or school change. Grace’s relationships with her father, her teachers and her friends added to her motivation. Like Mark her father had been more influential than her mother, her relationship with her father was one not of role modelling, it was one of seeking his approval and acceptance, a need to feel part

of the family. The relationship with her teachers was similar to that experienced by Mark and Ashlee and described by all three students as critical to their future achievements. Teachers showed they cared for their pupils not just what grades they achieved, but by smiling as they passed in the corridor or having the time to stop and acknowledge their students latest achievements. Having the right school environment where friends supported one another, while providing the safe and warm environment they required to study and socialise in were arguably some of the key factors that contributed to Grace's success.

Ricky's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2b,2b,2b
Key stage 2 results	4c,4c,4b
Key stage 3 results	5b,5c,5b
Key stage 4 Results	3xA*,5xA,2xB
Key stage 5 Results	A,B,B
University/Training	Durham University
CATS Score Mean SAS	96
CATS Score Mean verbal	100
CATS Score Mean Quantative	108
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	79
Jesson Rating	above
Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Moderate means
IDACI	0.478
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	2nd
Parental status	Married
local extended family	Yes

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	up to GCE
Choice of School	Brother at school
Yr 9 University Aspiration	yes
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	Brother
Homework	In after School clubs
attendance at school	97%
Career aspiration	Teaching

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Encouragement
Relationship to staff	Strong Influence
Relationship to Peers	Strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Brother
Parents read to them	yes
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	Weekends
Holidays/ Days out	Yes

a. Structures

- Family Structure

Ricky was the youngest son in a family of four; his brother was three years older than him. His parents were educated and married in the local community. Ricky's family had lived on the estate for a series of generations; he was surrounded by his extended family that had

remained in close contact with each other. His family was classed as being of moderate means; his father had gained some work based qualifications and had worked in the same job and developed a level of expertise within this field. Their rented semi-detached house was fairly standard for the estate and had a middle ranking IDACI rating for the research cohort.

- Family background

Ricky's background and early academic profile was a 'standard' white working class profile. His mother and father left school at 16 with a few qualifications. His father had been in the same job since leaving school, working in a small local factory making prosthetics. His mother had a few jobs between bringing up her two sons, and then worked as a teaching assistant in a local primary school. His grandparents, aunts and uncles all lived on the estate and occupied similar housing which had come available as they had been married and had their own families.

- Educational progress

Ricky's key stage 1 results were totally in line with the national average. Ricky had attended the local nursery attached to the local primary from age 3 years old and then moved into the same primary school, remaining there until moving into the (research) secondary school within the same catchment area. By the end of key stage 2 his English and mathematics grades were one sub-level below the national average with his science grade in-line with national averages. By key stage 3 his grades were still showing the same rate of progress; at this stage in his education Ricky had a 12% probability rate of gaining 5 A*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. For Ricky there was, however, a marked change in his progress rate which led him to achieve exceptional results at GCSE. It could be argued that his progress at primary school and lower secondary was due to underachievement as his CATs SAS score was ranked 3rd in the research group, a score which was at the top end of 'average'. When comparing the CATs score (Indicator of potential academic ability) against his final GCSE point score it is seen that his ranking within this research group dropped one place and Sam outperformed him into third position. However, Ricky had continued to achieve throughout key stage 5, gaining two A grades and a B grade in his A-level examinations which secured him a place at Durham University to read history.

b) Key practices influencing Ricky's academic success

- Language development

Opportunities to observe and to experience conversations with adults and peers had been plentiful within Ricky's family as he grew up. These opportunities enriched his vocabulary as well as giving him opportunities to formulate opinions and hold discussions on a vast number

of topics. Every week his family would eat a traditional Sunday roast dinner together with his extended family at his aunt's house, giving him plenty of opportunities to talk about his week and to become part of the family debates as they discussed local and world events. During the week in his own home the family would eat in the lounge, frequently in front of the television, rather than around a table; *"we have our meals on trays, we do talk to each other generally it is boring stuff but we do talk."* Ricky was close to his mother and daily he talked with her about his school day and received encouragement from her. *"When I get home I normally dump my bag down and the first thing I do is start to talk with my mum about the school day."* The close relationship between Ricky and his extended family is characteristic of many working class families. The extended family did support each other well and aspirations within the group did appear to foster positive attitudes within the family, who were all employed. The performance and aspirations of Ricky's cousins also showed that the family were broadening their overall horizons. This closeness also acted as a restricting factor as shown by his older brother who changed from studying away from the family home to remaining close by which allowed him to remain part of the family and his local community.

"Our family are very close knit family even the extended family and every Saturday we as a family would all go around to my aunt's, it's all my gran and grandpa's doing, and on the Sunday we would all go to my other aunt's. Then at Christmas we would gather together and then at Easter as well. I would also go to stay with my grandparents and they would read with me or do my homework with me."

- Reading practices within the home

The family practices experienced by Ricky especially those linked to literacy aided his overall achievement. Ricky explained how the family had plenty of books within the home and this had allowed him throughout his life to access a wide range of reading material. *"Yes we have loads of books all over the house, we both [brothers] have book cases in our bedrooms, and my room is a bit like a library I really like books."* Reading was part of the family culture and had been both encouraged and role modelled by his parents.

"Mum and dad both read, we have a variety of books from educational and reference books to story books. As a kid I saw mum and dad reading mainly on holiday. It was good to see my parents reading and they have encouraged me to read all the way through primary school. Mum and Dad have read to us at bedtime since we were little. When I got home from school my mum would help me with my reading homework and then as I was older she encouraged me to

do my homework, we did it together and she would check it, read it through or help me to remember things. Spellings we did together.”

- Wider family experiences and holidays

It was not only family meals that the extended family shared together; key holidays had always been an extended family ‘experience’.

“...we went on family holidays. I remember going to Spain in 2009 there was a lot of us who went as normal. Dad had read a lot about where we were going and what we could see when we got there. We did a lot of the cultural things, and dad acted like a guide on the holiday and told us about all the places. We went and saw a cathedral.”

His experience of being so close to his family had shaped his vision of his future and he remained set within the working class culture of the family living close and having a shared life. Young and Willmott (1952) in their classic study of East London showed that even as families moved out of the East Docklands and moved into the suburbs, once established these close-knit communities re-established themselves. For Ricky although he saw himself going to university and living in a better house out of the estate and in a country setting, his family structure would remain central to his life.

“I have always had my ideal dream house as a house in the country side, where it is all peaceful, just like me and my family all in this house, not too far away from extended family, and where I work, but I just like the idea of the countryside probably somewhere in this county.”

c) Key dispositions influencing Ricky’s academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Family could be a factor that worked against success but was also seen by Ricky as a driving force which had provided the energy, motivation and encouragement for him to achieve academic success. A quick glance at Ricky’s academic profile shows that there had been accelerated progress from the age of 14, at the end of key stage 3, when he selected his GCSE courses. At this age he appeared to have set himself a goal to go to university. This time coincided with his elder brother passing his GCSEs. Although his brother did well and passed as many qualifications as Ricky, his overall grades were not as high. Ricky stated that his mother and brother had both been a major influence upon him and aided his ultimate success.

“I definitely think my mum has been the driving force in all of it as I have come home some days and been like ‘ I really can’t do this’ and she has picked me up and she has said that I can do it and so I go up to my room and look at my work and have a go...I actually think my brother has helped as well, I know we have our banter we argue and we do whatever other brothers do but he is like ‘I have these grades you need to beat them he has always encouraged me as well. It has not been like a selfish ambition, ‘I hope you don’t get them grades’; it has been good banter. I have got to beat his A-levels grades but he got two A*s. I will try to at least to equal them. My whole family has encouraged me along the way.”

- Choice of school

Although Ricky’s attended his local primary and secondary school similar to his elder brother, his parents did appear to have researched a little into which secondary school they wished him to attend. Using the categories provided by Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995) Ricky’s parents would have been classed as semi-skilled choosers. The school was at the point of ‘Fresh-Start’ as Ricky started. The new leadership team held open events promoting the new vision and ethos of the school.

“I think it was the year that the school was to re-open and they went to the open evening and heard all the new ideas from the school and they were really good and they really wanted me to go to the local school although it had not been a good school before then. We did think about the other two schools but they liked what they heard about this one. They also knew one of the PE teachers who had just come to this school. They had met him on the year 6 open day and they liked him and believed what he said. My brother was here and he had a really good relationship with the sports teachers and this was important.”

Using the information they heard was one deciding point, however, the relationships formed by both his brother and Ricky during a year 6 event with a PE teacher had a major impact upon the decision making process. The use of the information as well as considering their new relationships removed them from the ‘Disconnected’ choosers group who Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995) link more closely with working class parents who allow the child to make the choice. Educational underachievement is perpetuated as friendship groups from local deprived communities cluster together in the local neighbourhood schools which are already under resourced and underperforming. It has been argued that parents are not disconnected from the selection of schools for their children but they would normally select the local

community school because this had a similar culture to their own local working class community and they felt better aligned to these local schools (Halsey, 1972).

- Peer Group

Throughout the research time Ricky maintained that the strongest impact on his academic success was the influence of his family, teachers and friends. Parents and teachers can have a major affect upon a student; but any positive ethos can have little impact unless it is fully embedded and owned by the actions of the students. Friendship groups create social capital (*Ridge 2006*). Where the social capital is out of sync with the educational world, a strong friendship group that embraces the values of academic achievement and follows the practices of developing high quality learning can create a situation where instead of the young people feeling like 'a fish out of water' (*Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992*) they are able to live within this paradox and cope with this 'duality of being' (*Reay, 2006*). Working towards a place at university or staying on at school beyond 16 to gain further vocational qualification becomes acceptable behaviour and the need to fit in with a 'laddish' cultural is removed (*Reay 2006*). As Ricky said:

"They have been amazing really. Really good to see them studying, has motivated me. If I am at home and I am thinking, 'I am sat here watching the telly, and I am not doing anything productive, I think someone else is at home and they have their books out and are studying why am I not doing anything'. So I go straight and get my books out and start studying straight away that's my motivation...As long as they are honest with me and they can make me work and study with them, encourage and motivate me; because obviously there are going to be times now and then, when I am at university when I am going to feel rubbish, and think that I cannot do it and that it is too hard, but as long as they help me through it then I think that they are good friends and I will keep them."

- School

Ricky was influenced by his school and his teachers. The selection of the school in year 7 illustrates this, influenced by a relationship that had been formed with a PE teacher during the transition programme. Ricky acknowledged that two teachers in particular had a great impact upon his success since key stage 3;

"...the PE teacher and my history teacher... this is going to sound really cheesy but it has been the teachers, the inspiration of the teachers, a lot of the teachers that were here when I was in year 7 have now gone now, but they were the

ones that said, 'you need to do this, you need to do that'. This was something that I needed, that would help me ensure that I get my work done. Basically they nagged me in a nice way, and said you will be successful if you do this, especially when it was coming up to exam times. My history teacher spent plenty of time with me showing me how to write exam answers and essays, she was experienced in marking and gave me lots of tips. She really knew what she was doing and hammered all the tips into us, really good advice for the exam...she never doubted, if we ever doubted ourselves, like we did after the surgery exam in June; we came out feeling that we had not done very well she kept saying 'no you did do well.' We came out with A*. Many teachers know their stuff, but there is something about when the teacher believes in you that makes a difference."

Ricky's final point here is important; he acknowledged that it was important for teachers to be well educated and to be well trained to teach young people. They also needed to be confident in their skills and know the examination system and how best to pass examinations which is a different skill than just having good knowledge of your subject. However, to Ricky what was an essential ingredient was the teacher having an unwavering belief in their students and that they would achieve. There were no excuses provided, the teachers enacted the belief that every child was able and would achieve. Research (Marshall, 2013) and data from improving schools (Ofsted, 2009) shows that having this ethos is a common factor in these schools. This study would agree and stress how 'teacher belief' which is much greater than just words, acts as a raising agent within school success. Creating an ethos where teachers' belief is that they will do all to ensure that every child whatever their circumstances, is intrinsically motivated to achieve, while encouraging also a belief within parents that their child can achieve their ultimate dreams is critical to success here. The journey for improvement remains one of extreme struggle for many students. Taking a 'no excuses' approach reflects the statement made by Christine Blower (2008). In the years since, schools may talk about taking a 'no excuses' approach but second rate teaching, poor use of teaching assistants, lack of quality resources, poor classroom behaviour are still common failings seen in Ofsted reports for some schools. However, there is not a straight forward link between the failings of schools and the progression of white working class children (Marshall, 2013).

- Future career and higher education choices

Ricky's parents provided a secure family setting in which education was seen as important. His parents continued their own education gaining further qualifications at night school. For generations children in Ricky's family have all completed school at the age of 15-16 and then

moved into local trades. Ricky and his brother were the first in his immediate family to attend university although the trend was shifting and his cousin hoped to train to be a teacher also. Ricky's brother was offered a place at Falmouth University two years before Ricky completed his secondary schooling, in the School of Art for a foundation course. Unfortunately due to the family's finances and the lack of government grants for foundation courses he was unable to take the place and instead attended a local college for the art course and then remained at the local college which offered degree courses to complete his art degree. The importance of the reputation of a university or School of Art for Ricky's brother did not seem to be fully appreciated by the family. Completing a foundation course at a local college and then moving to a well-respected degree course at a reputable School of Art may have offered his brother greater opportunities in his further career. The research school had offered advice but once the local offer of a place had been gained his brother had selected this more financially viable option. However for Ricky the advice given to him had been acted upon and he secured a place at a Russell Group university.

Since year 9 Ricky had been confident that he wanted to attend university with the ambition to eventually be a teacher. "I definitely want to go to university I am thinking about Oxford or Cambridge or Bath. I quite like the look of Bath University to do Humanities". In year 11 his selection of universities was still driven by a desire to be closer to home, which had shifted by the end of year 13, opting to attend a university some hundreds of miles from home. For any young person leaving the family home can be hard, but this tends to be stronger within working class culture and expressed strongly by Ricky. His strong family ties could have prevented him from moving out of the estate.

d). Concluding points

At the age of eleven there was nothing remarkable about Ricky and his academic progress. He entered secondary school as a fairly academically average lad; coming from a working class background; his family had grown up on the estate over the generations. He had a stable family background which was not the 'norm' for all on the estate, and having two parents who had been in long term employment had provided economically for the family. Ricky's story showed a marked change, a series of triggers that came together at the age of 14 to greatly influence his motivation and led to a highly driven work ethic and a determination to go to university. He was driven to achieve better results than his brother and to become a teacher, which could mean moving away from the estate. Like Grace the triggers provided a turning point.

Both Mark and Ricky were the second child born into their families, and both seemed to have benefitted from the elder brother or sister having paved the way forward for them to follow.

Mark's sister went to university in Cardiff and Ricky's brother gained a place at Falmouth. Both older siblings had high examination grades at GCSE and then A-Level to set up an element of sibling rivalry. For Ashlee, her young uncle was the trail blazer having gained a place at Reading University before leaving the estate and working aboard. However, with Grace the relationship seen between her and her brother was rather different due to the fact that her brother had grown up with her parents. Grace, the eldest child joined the family when she was eight, giving the impression that she was the second child and found herself competing with her brother who she perceived as more academic.

The influence of school teachers dominated Ricky's story. A relationship with his PE teacher influenced the selection of the school. Ricky joined the trampoline club which kept him motivated and engaged throughout his lower secondary school experience. His history teacher had built upon this relationship influencing his work ethic and Ricky developed a strong belief in himself that he could achieve grades that would enable him to go to a top university to study history. Mark, Ashlee and Grace all showed the power that one or more teacher could have, encouraging them to attend university and providing the self-belief that they would achieve, and no excuses would be accepted. Ricky, Mark and Ashlee's stories show how a teacher could influence the beliefs of the parents enabling them to support the achievement of their child.

What dominated these stories was the presence of a 'matched ethos' or at least shared actions even though the culture between school, family and friends differed. For a working class culture actions can be the dominating force. Trust built up not from what one said but what was done for the community. The impact of a teacher having a belief in Ricky's ability guided her actions and acted as the catalyst for Ricky, surrounded by parents and friends who re-enforced this belief, and together these influences had provided enough power to overcome the negatives experienced by other children in the school, and living on this estate. The catalysts for change for Ricky were pedagogic effort and consciousness. Success bred greater aspiration supported by his family and friends to achieve within school and move into higher education.

Yvonne's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2b,2a,2a
Key stage 2 results	5,4a,5
Key stage 3 results	6a,5a,6b
Key stage 4 Results	1xA* , 5xA, 2xB,2xC
Key stage 5 Results	A,A,B,D
University/Training	Nottingham
CATS Score Mean SAS	102
CATS Score Mean verbal	94
CATS Score Mean Quantative	102
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	109
Jesson Rating	High

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	None
Choice of School	Spaces available
Yr 9 University Aspiration	yes
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	
Homework	In School, after school
attendance at school	95%
Career aspiration	Not Sure

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Manual
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Moderate means
IDACI	0.54
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+1
Position in siblings	1st
Parental status	Married
local extended family	no

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Dad helped
Relationship to staff	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	Medium Influence
Influence of a single person	Father
Parents read to them	no
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	no
Eat as a family	Weekends
Holidays/ Days out	Yes

a. Structures

- Family structure

Yvonne was an only child and lived with her mother and father, who had been married some years before she was born. Her father was a chef, like Grace's father; he worked in a local restaurant. Her mother was a waitress, and worked in the same restaurant as her husband.

Yvonne had not lived on the estate all her life but had travelled around southern England with her parents, as her father had sought employment in a number of restaurants. She lived in the heart of the estate in a rented semi-detached house. The IDACI index showed that her home was situated within one of the more deprived areas of the estate, with the lowest rating of 0.54 for this cohort. Yvonne's parents were caught in a deprivation cycle as both worked in low paid manual jobs, and worked very long hours in order to earn more money (as reflected by the moderate means' income rating). However, this rating was only maintained as they sacrificed quality family time in order to have regular income within the household. As a result Yvonne spent a great deal of time on her own, or in school after school hours. Yvonne had developed a strong work ethic seeing that to live 'within your own means' required long hours to be worked.

- Family Background

The strong work ethic held by Yvonne's family was a reaction to the parents' early life and they were keen for Yvonne not to have to repeat their experiences. Her parents left school at the age of 16 having not taken any examinations; there had been pressure from their families to start work in order to contribute to the income of the family.

"I think I have succeeded in school because my parents have insisted on me doing my homework and at my previous school you had to do it, but here other children did not do so much homework and the teachers seemed to think that was ok. So I did so much better because I was doing my work. My parents did not do well at school. They had to go out to work, but they want me to study so I can have a better job. I work hard so I will not be an embarrassment to them and have no work hard after all they do for me."

- Educational progress

Yvonne's early educational career did show that she was above average in mathematics and science, while in line with the national average for English. Her progress from an early positive start did signal that she was above average and she made good progress in English and science and moved to one level above the average by the end of key stage 2 , and a sub level

higher than the national average in mathematics. Her Jesson rating based on her key stage 2 results placed her in the 'High' achieving group for key stage 4 results. This level of progress was sustained throughout key stage 3 and she achieved a whole level of progress in English and mathematics, from her key stage 2 results, and two sub levels in science. Yvonne succeeded in achieving 6 A*-A grade GCSEs which placed her in the highest achievement group. She remained at the research school for years 12-13 and achieved two A-grades in business studies, and computer studies; a B grade in mathematics but a D grade in English. The results for the total cohort at the school for English literature were disappointing, and students failed to achieve their target grades. Yvonne achieved the two A- grades and a B grade required to go to Nottingham University to study business management.

Her final choice of subjects and those she achieved her higher grades in reflected her CATs results; quantitative and non-verbal scores were above average and her verbal score was her lowest, just below national average.

a) Key practices influencing Yvonne's academic success

- Language development

Yvonne developed strong skills as a highly independent young person and learner. Creating the balance between a family life and providing enough money for a family had its own costs and Yvonne as a single child had paid the cost of her parents wishing to provide for her rather than 'take hand-outs' from the state. This work ethic had driven Yvonne forward but the cost to her was all too real.

"If I have something important to tell them then I will call them and speak to them. Because they work long hours we don't get much time."

There was little family time spent together on a daily basis, and therefore language development opportunities occurred more frequently in the school environment than in the home. Meals times apart from some weekends when her parents were not working were taken on her own and did not offer the quality time for the family to discuss daily issues.

- Reading practices within the home

Yvonne's household was not rich in resources. Although she estimated they did have about 50 books she felt these were generally reference books, a dictionary, many cook books which her father used for his work and a few books Yvonne had as revision guides; very few fictional books were present. She had little recollection of her parents reading to her when she was young and the family owned few children's books. Although Yvonne would love to share her

studies with her parents; she was aware that her academic achievement divided her from her parents, although they were extremely proud of her.

“They have never been able to help me with my homework as they also don’t have the knowledge of the subjects I am studying so this has been hard. It would have been nice to have had them read to me, and I think it would have meant I knew more things and perhaps would not have had to work so hard.”

Yvonne is aware that her parents’ lack of educational achievement had disadvantaged her and she had to work much harder than other students who had the educational backing of their parents. This had not prevented her from achieving but shed light on the struggle that children from families living in poverty have to overcome. Some of the cultural battle had already been fought for Yvonne, as her parents had not been afraid to move from their ‘family home’ and travel in search of work. Her parents did not wish her to have the same struggles in life they had experienced. They wished for her to study beyond the age of 16 years of age and did not demand that she contribute financially to the household as there parents had required.

Wider family experiences and holidays

Acknowledging that her parents worked long hours, Yvonne’s family took regular holidays which allowed them to spend time together and visit new places in England. They did not take holidays abroad but did have four weeks away every year as a family.

“We do [take holidays] my parents take their four weeks off at the same time which means we can visit places in England or we can go to see family members. That’s been the general pattern.”

Spending time as a family and enjoying new experiences together beyond the home Allat (1993) said was one aspect of emotional capital. In her study of families who sent their children to private school she defined emotional capital as valued assets and skills, love and affection, time spent with family, attention, care and concern. Children sent to private school gained high levels of social and economic capital which came together in the form of ‘privilege’, while those where this was beyond their reach converted emotional capital into cultural capital to provide economic gain. Yvonne spent a lot of time alone in the home while her parents worked long hours, but they attempted to compensate for this by spending time together as a family. The opportunities beyond the home and local community and the emotional support of her parents aided the development of the internal drive that Yvonne had.

b) Key dispositions influencing Yvonne's academic success

- Role models and influences of significant people

Although Yvonne had achieved her academic success independently she was driven forward to achieve through the role model of her father.

“...this would be my dad. He works so hard and has tried to gain further qualifications for his career. He needed English and Maths so studied for these and needed to get up early in the morning before he went to work to study but he worked hard and when he took them he passed first time. But he had to work so hard that I am determined to pass mine now I am at school. I am staying on to sixth form so must not waste this opportunity which my parents did not have.”

Driven by the injustice of her parents' past experiences Yvonne had a strong internal motivation which propelled her forward, determined not to see all her parents' hard work go to waste. Yvonne was fully aware that her parents had to go to work at an early age unable to gain many qualifications which therefore restricted their employment opportunities, resulting in a hard working life for them.

“My parents left school at 16; they did not really take many exams as their families were quite poor and needed them to start work... My parents did not do well and want me to do better and so that I will not be an embarrassment to them and have no work.”

Having spent a great deal of time on her own made her work hard, mirroring the efforts of her parents. There was a strong bond between her and her parents and when not at work they clearly showed that all they did was for the family as a whole and this allowed Yvonne to have the opportunities that they never had. Parental aspirations can have a positive effect upon the academic success of their children (Gordon, 1971). Where these aspirations are expressed through the encouragement of their children's own educational journey and interests, this provides a freedom to create success in a supported environment. Research carried out by Evans (2006), observing the nurture of children by the families on one large UK estate, concluded that where parents spent time with their children, took an active role in their education and provided a variety of new experiences, greater success within the educational system was experienced, and the child engaged more fully with the entire educational experience. This pattern of nurture was however, Evans concluded, in opposition to working class culture. Halsey (1972) supports this stating that the educational failure of working class children was the fault of schools not supporting a working class culture and aspirations. For Yvonne, her family's aspirations sought to move her from those traditionally held by the

working class; there was a strong desire to move beyond their current habitus and instead embrace a life which rewarded academic achievement and enterprise.

- Choice of school

Yvonne attended the research secondary school not through parental choice but more due to necessity. Having arrived into the town after the school allocations had been made the school was the only one with places. A middle class parent may have appealed against the shortage of places in their selected school, but Yvonne's parents acted in a similar way to many other working class parents and did not fight the system accepting the place (*Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe 1995*). Parents with poor personal levels of education can be either unaware of their rights or fearful of the bureaucratic system surrounding parental choice of schools.

"I started school before I was four but during that year I had to change school because we moved and I went from a small school to a much larger one and I think that was quite scary, but the change made me become a little more confident in myself. I had to change again due to my parents' jobs and moved to this school... As I started later this school was the only school which had places so we came here. It was close to my house and we were told it was a good school. Dad visited the school and liked it so I came here."

- Peer group

Yvonne spent a great deal of her day in school, she arrived in school early each morning meeting her friends in the canteen where they started the day talking about the things ahead and eating breakfast. She took part in a number of school clubs and enjoyed both sport and music with her friends. The peer group provided stability and support on a daily basis. Although she was on the edge of the friendship group, Yvonne benefitted from the strong work ethic they also had which complemented well with that generated by her parents.

Aware of the lack of leisure facilities available on the estate Yvonne was critical of the school, she believed that more could be done by the school to compensate for the lack of opportunities they experienced as individuals and balance the need to work so hard to achieve, with the need for good quality leisure time with her friends.

"I think we should have more trips and be taken out more so we can widened our knowledge not just what we read and study. We also need a good balance between study and some leisure time which we don't have much opportunity for around here."

- School

Yvonne did appreciate the opportunities she had been given by the school but also saw that she did have a right to gain a good education. She worked hard in school and felt that this should be matched by having good quality teachers and resources so she could achieve this. Holding this belief did not distract her from fostering good relationships with her teachers. She was aware of the support they provided for her:

“I think the recent campaign to become Head Girl has really helped as the teachers have encouraged me and so have the students and this has shown me the confidence they have in me, and they believe that I have done so well.”

- Future career and higher education choices

Yvonne was one of a small group of students who selected a university which was located away from the local area. However, Yvonne did not have the same ties to the local area, having become accustomed to moving home and travelling with her family in search of work. She had selected Nottingham as she liked the course they offered and she was attracted to the university environment when visiting it.

“I visited a few universities; especially those I believed offered me the best courses. My parents weren’t able to visit them all with me, but Dad came to Nottingham with me and I instantly liked it and knew it was where I wanted to study. I am delighted I have the grades to go and am really looking forward to living in Nottingham.”

Yvonne selected a vocational course to study at University. It was not a natural pathway for a child of Yvonne’s background to progress on to a top university; three quarters of middle class children go on to university, while only a third of working class children enter university (*Babbs, 2005*). Yvonne’s selection of course was in line with previously observed practice. While middle-class parents find university a natural progression from A-level study and are more likely to encourage a general academic exploration (*Rose 2001*); working class children who do venture into university normally study courses which are directed towards their future career (*Perrucci et al 2006*) and seen as an essential step out of the family’s normal job field and into a career which has greater opportunity for higher earnings and related quality of life.

“I want to get a higher education as this will get me a much better job. I would like to go to the top universities like Bath or Bristol. These are close to my house so I can live with my parents and still study. This will be the only way that we will be able to finance it, so its common sense really. I would like to study

Business as this will be good for getting a good job; I am also good at maths so financial work would be open to me...My parents never went so I need to know more about it, they encourage me to be the first in my family to go to university and this would make them so proud. They really encourage me to do well and that way I can have a good future.”

d). Concluding points

Yvonne's story differs from the others in the research cohort. Her academic profile showed that she had high potential from an early age and not the same as the patterns described by Feinstein (2003); where high early achievers from deprived backgrounds were superseded by lower achievers from higher economic social groupings by age 11. Yvonne maintained her academic standing and remained within the high achievers group throughout her educational career and succeeded in gaining a place at a top university.

Having a good start academically was matched by her parent's outlook on life. Mark's father stressed the importance of education and demonstrated how having some qualifications enabled one to find opportunities beyond the factory floor (consciousness catalysts for change, Kupfer 2015). Ashlee's mother was driven by a desire for her daughter not to have to suffer the same fate as she had endured in her life, and was able to see escape via the positive route of educational achievement. For Grace her unsettled start in life, away from her parents, had driven her to please them in order to be accepted like her brother, and saw academic success as the route to achieving this. Yvonne was motivated by the role models of her father and mother, who worked extremely long hours to create money, so their small amount of time together, could be a rich variety of new and 'world-widening' experiences. Yvonne, Grace and to a lesser extent Ricky, experienced holidays with their parents which provided enriched cultural experiences, while Mark's parents, unable to afford holidays for the whole family saved to send Mark and his sister aboard on school trips. Experiencing and seeing a 'larger world' together as a family, added to the encouragement his parents gave, in support of their children's schooling.

Leanne's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a,2b,2a
Key stage 2 results	5,4b,4c
Key stage 3 results	6c,6a,6c
Key stage 4 Results	4xA*,1xA,5xB,1xC
Key stage 5 Results	B,C,C
University/Training	Birmingham City
CATS Score Mean SAS	91
CATS Score Mean verbal	92
CATS Score Mean Quantative	92
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	90
Jesson Rating	above

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	CSE/RSA
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	Sister
Homework	in school
attendance at school	92%
Career aspiration	Not sure

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Manual
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.317
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+4
Position in siblings	4th
Parental status	re-married
local extended family	yes - Many

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	little support
Relationship to staff	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Friend/sister
Parents read to them	no
student reads at home	no
Books within the home	no
Eat as a family	no
Holidays/ Days out	yes

a) Structures

- Family structure

Leanne was the fourth child in a family of six. She had three sisters. Her father and mother divorced just after she entered secondary school. Leanne and two of her sisters lived in the family home in the heart of the estate, her father had moved away and she had little contact with him. Her mother had recently re-married but Leanne understood the hardship her mother had experienced as a single parent. Leanne's oldest sister Kayleigh had a partner and two children and lived close by on the estate.

- Family background

Leanne's mother and step-father worked in a large retail warehouse. Her birth father worked as a template maker in a local company. Before working at the warehouse Leanne's mother worked as a cleaner in another large retail store locally. Economically the family was classed as 'hard-pressed', although their IDACI index was not the lowest value on the estate. Both Leanne's parents left school without qualifications, having also been educated on the estate school. Her extended family lived close and had a long history on the estate as well as reputation.

- Educational progress

During key stage 1 and 2 Leanne showed some academic potential working above average in English across both key stages. Her progress in science was above average in key stage 1 but dropped to below average by the end of key stage 2. Her progress with English slowed during key stage 3, and although she finished two sub levels above national average she had not achieved the same rate of progress as she had in mathematics. Leanne was in the top sets for the core subjects throughout her secondary education years but was not always motivated to work hard and to succeed. During year 8 and 9, after the divorce of her parents, and the movement out of the family home of her eldest sister, Leanne found herself drawn into 'trouble' at school. Although nothing major she appeared to follow a similar path to that of her sisters as if this was expected of her. Comments made by staff to Leanne, appeared to condone her change in behaviour. Leanne stated, "*Some teachers said that they were not surprised by my pattern of behaviour and that I was going the same way as my sisters*". Living up to a reputation can be hard, moving away from it could seem impossible.

Leanne's CATs profile (only just into the average category) does not have a strong correlation with her final key stage 4 results, showing she was well above average achieving 4 A* and 1 A grade, taking her into the top grouping nationally. Progress did not continue as rapidly going

forward into key stage 5 but she gained three A-levels and secured a place at Birmingham City University, an achievement alien to her family.

b) Key practices influencing Leanne's academic success

- Language development

Due to the working pattern of her mother and transcendent living patterns of her sisters, opportunities for social conversation within Leanne's home were limited but present when required.

"...we eat on the sofa. If mum can be bothered to cook we eat together but if not we have to cook our own food. [When we do chat] we just discuss normal stuff, she asks me what I did that day and I ask her if work was ok. But if something bothers me I can just talk to mum at any time, just tell her straight away. I don't really speak with my sisters as they are always busy. But if I want to speak with Kayleigh I just ring her up, because she has got her kids and she is at college."

More varied opportunities to verbally explore topical subjects were present for Leanne in school: in class discussions, with friends and through extra-curricular clubs that she attended with Grace and Ricky.

- Reading practices within the home

Having an awareness of the importance of education and the practices which families can develop within the home toward the acquisition of intellect did not dominate Leanne's upbringing. Having surplus finances to acquire books and educational materials had not been possible for Leanne and her family. Although these resources were not available her mother did role model some aspect of reading to her as she grew up, *"My mum reads the newspaper sometimes. I don't see my dad that much so I am not sure [whether he reads]."*

Leanne's mother and step father did take a certain degree of interest in her educational development. Although unaware of the impact of their actions upon her as she grew up, her mother did read to her and Leanne's step father, during her latter secondary education, offered some help with checking her homework. *"My mum read me bedtime stories and dad used to help me with my homework."* The onus for having an interest in her studies appeared to have come from Leanne. As her grades improved and school reports became positive her mother and step father engaged more with her, and attended some school functions. The fear of having yet another child who failed to pass GCSE examinations had dissipated and thoughts

of their own academic failure no longer dominated. Leanne was encouraged by her parents to stay on into the sixth form, the first in her family to do so and to apply and to go to university.

All parents in the research group expressed that they wished to do the best for their children, but what was observed with all the parents in the research group was their lack of resources to carry out their wishes, coupled with their lack of personal skills to develop the academic potential of their child. Leanne's mother read to her at bedtime when she was a young child. Leanne was unaware of the potential benefits provided by the actions of her mother who may have not stressed to her the importance of reading or set this in a context of educational aspiration. *"...she just read to me and I fell asleep, I am not sure if it did have any effect on me."* Being read to creates a bond between a parent and their child, and although Leanne may not have been aware of the full impact that this practice had upon her it would have given her some grounding to develop her own literacy skills.

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Holidays were viewed by Leanne as a social and leisure activity. Mark, Ricky and Grace voiced them as being an instrument which added to their wider educational experience.

"I have had a few holidays, as a family we went to Spain, and then like camping trips. But we have not been on holiday for a couple of years. When we did go they were just leisure times we just had fun. We used to go camping quite a lot but now that dad has moved out we don't."

It was unlikely that Mark, Ricky and Grace had always viewed holidays in this way. The process of this research may have changed their views on the importance of travel; or they heard teachers talk about the importance of seeing the wider world as they shared their own pictures in lessons related to historical buildings they had visited or arts of work they had seen. Mark, Grace and Ricky had also described holidays they had enjoyed that were social and a leisure activity.

c) Key dispositions influencing Leanne's academic success

- Role models and influence of significant people

Three different groups of people Leanne believed, changed the course of her educational achievement; these were her sister, her friends and her school teachers.

"My sister Kayleigh [has influenced me]. Because she had kids when she was eighteen and she worked at Deanwater and she might be made redundant and she realised that she wanted to do better and now wants to be a radiographer. So she wanted to go to college and to university now. She always moans at

me about doing it as she wanted to do it. She encourages me. My mum helps me. But she says just to do whatever makes me happy. She leaves it up to me, she trusts me I guess.”

Kayleigh left school at sixteen and went to work at a local company, a basic job with few career prospects, but it was able to provide her with a regular wage. By eighteen she was in a relationship and had her first child, a year later she had her second child. During this period of time Leanne started to become more involved in school and was starting to see success. Leanne stressed that her sister’s experiences had impacted upon her academic achievement, while it was true to say that Leanne showed greater faith in the school system, her sister had been able to draw from this and sought to gain further qualifications in order to better her situation and provide greater opportunities than she had for her own children. There was an interesting comparison between the view expressed by Leanne’s sister Kayleigh and her own mother. Kayleigh illustrated to Leanne the importance of gaining a good education and the opportunities this provided to live a better life. While it would be unfair to say that Leanne’s mother did not also want the best for her daughters she did little to stress the importance of education as an agent for change. Her mother not ‘nagging’ Leanne like Kayleigh appeared to do, especially when her sister believed Leanne was taking the ‘easy route’ and not working hard in school, might have given her short term happiness as voiced by her mother. Working hard to create longer term rewards was not presented as a workable option by Leanne’s mother to any of her daughters.

- Choice of school

The selection of a secondary school for Leanne was a straight forward decision as she already had three older sisters who attended the research school and so she followed. Leanne explained the selection of the school primarily being *“Because all of my friends were there or going there.”* The expectation that it was the local school and all children on the estate went there was enough for her mother to continue to send her where her sisters had attended, even though they had created a reputation for themselves and had little academic success. *“I don’t think we had any [information] it was just the nearest school to us.”* If a garage serviced a car poorly over a series of years it is highly likely that the customer would seek an alternative provider, but when it comes to educating a child the expectation that a child might do better in a different school was not considered by her parents, or was not acknowledged. The publication of league tables in local areas has not provided open access for all parents to make informed choices. The research school was bottom of the league tables for many years but Leanne’s parents appeared to have little knowledge of the league table or to not have understood them or had no expectation that any one of their daughters would succeed in

education. Leanne was in walking distance of at least two other schools, but both these lay outside of the estate, which the family had lived in for many generations and therefore did not figure as possible choices for Leanne to attend.

- Peer group

Leanne acknowledged how her school life changed dramatically due to the actions of one science teacher and the formation of a new friendship. The school policy for classroom behaviour created a system of choices and consequences. If a student made the wrong choice about their behaviour they accepted that there were consequences for their actions. Having continually failed to settle in a science lesson one day during year 9, Leanne's science teacher warned her about her behaviour, then was called to implement the second consequence and moved her away from her friends and to sit next to Grace. This seating change became a permanent arrangement, and although Grace was unsure about Leanne, known more by reputation than actual experience, she aimed to work with Leanne and create a workable environment for her within science. After a few weeks of Leanne failing to hand in homework Grace explained to her how she remained in school in the library in the evening as she also found it hard to work at home. Grace invited Leanne to work with her after school and to complete their science homework together. Leanne stated that she was not particularly sure why she decided to go, but she did and things at school turned around from that point very quickly.

Leanne's academic success was linked to this marked change in her peer group. After the chance happening of being made to move seats during a science lesson she found herself associating with students with a very different outlook on education and their possible futures. Her new friends complemented the view portrayed by her sister, seeing that life did not have to follow a particular pattern and that an 'escape' might be found in education.

"Some of my friends distracted me. Then I made new friends and they influenced me and that is what helped me to get my grades. Because my new friends loved to study and I wanted to be with them so I studied as well. We would encourage each other but when my new friends were not there I would get distracted by my old friends as they were not working and did not see the point."

The key to the change in Leanne was connected to the attitude that some students had to their studies, i.e. 'seeing the point', being able to look beyond way things had always been for their families and friends, and having the ability to view the world beyond the estate, beyond the traditional ways and create a break with working class culture. Having access into 'seeing

the point' was supported by a number of linked factors. For Leanne, these included, the life experiences of her sister, the educational behaviour patterns of her new friends, and most important of all, her belief in herself and her own abilities to succeed, which came about as she experienced educational success.

“Well when my friends helped me to study and I got that first ‘A’ that really encouraged me to carry on because I knew that I could now do it but if I did not study I would not get another ‘A’. That really encouraged me because I believed before that, that I would barely get a C or a D. when I got that ‘A’ I could not believe it I thought it must be a mistake. After that I did start to believe that it really was possible and I could do it.”

Leanne's experience illustrated well the change she made moving from two opposing groups of students. Brown (1986) classed one group as those who were 'getting in' illustrated here by the actions of Leanne's former friends who saw little purpose to education and attended school because they legally had to and saw it more as a social club to meet ones friends rather than engage with the education on offer. Leanne's new group of friends were 'getting out', using the education system as a mechanism to move on and compete with the middle class, to gain qualifications and move into careers normally outside of their class experience. Kayleigh aligned with the group Brown classed as 'Rems' those within the 'getting in' group who were so alienated by the educational world and values offered by the school system that they staked their claim to adulthood as soon as possible, Kayleigh was pregnant by 17 and by twenty had two young children and was living away from the family home. Having seen her mother and sister struggle with living their adult life, Leanne was offered an alternative way; with her new friends she guided herself forward, with her sister's voice in her head acting as a voice of encouragement she ventured forward to seek a way out of the struggles previously experienced by her family.

- School

Leanne's academic profile at an early age showed that she had some academic ability. Although she attended a nursery from the age of three linked to the local primary she felt that this contributed little to her educational progress. *“I suppose it helped me to make friends and learn those social skills. It was a good thing as I have grown up with some of these friends.”*

While being encouraged to embrace a positive approach to school life by her sister and her new friends, Leanne acknowledged the role that her teachers also played in turning around her educational experience. The action of one science teacher and the sequence of consequential events that followed were acknowledged by Leanne:

“The teachers helped me as well but my friends like Grace helped me more. I was moved next to her by one of my teachers in a science lesson, we eventually got talking, we were quite different but then she helped me with my homework and I realised that in many ways we were the same and wanted the same things in life. We have been great friends since.”

- Future career and higher education choices

Leanne was the first of her family to attend university. The family feared that she would be deeply in debt and that this qualification would not necessarily provide her with a job later in life that would enable her to pay back the debt. Although this is the experience for some graduates they were able to see that if she wished to become a social worker she would need further training and therefore they supported her decision.

“Many people say you will get into debt if you go to university, well you won’t if you study and get your degree and then get a good job, because you are properly qualified; because you will make enough money to pay the money back. My parents never went to university I will be the first in my family if I go although my step brother is at university now. I do want to be the first person of my mum’s kids to go to university to break through that barrier... I would like to live in London. I want to live somewhere big and expensive and have a massive house. To have a Range Rover, Mercedes and a BMW or all three of them! ... I know that I will have achieved success when I have kids and they want to grow up like me. When they want to go to university and have nice things like I have. That will really make me happy. But if I become a social worker that will be a bit of success to me as well.”

d) Concluding points

Leanne understood the influence that her friends and her teachers had upon decisions she had made during her school years; however, she remained adamant that changes occurred within a person only when they wished them to happen. Outside influences played their part but being able to change the course of one’s life was not she felt a subconscious act but a conscious act of being aware of the impact that your decisions had on your subsequent life. Whether this is the truth it was how she perceived it to be. She felt in control and fully aware that she was making decisions that were not in tune with those her family had previously made.

“Certain teachers at school have helped me especially with my UCAS application and encouraging me to go to university. The graduation ceremony we had at the end of year 11 was great as well, as my mum and dad came and

they saw what I had achieved and they listened to some of my teachers and they are not so concerned about me going to university now. Other than those things overall I don't think there is anything else because I think really that the school can't really influence people it is what they want to do that really counts."

For Leanne her shift in perception was the result of a number of events colliding at a similar point which allowed her to make changes in her life: the influence of her sister, the new friendships, achieving success in school all allowed her teachers to see herself in a new light. Using the identified catalysts (Kupfer, 2015) Leanne's story illustrates, no actualisation of habitus: family structure was remaining the same while her changing peer group and wider experiences provided by school were giving a different meaning to her life. Her story also illustrates 'consciousness', her sister felt 'trapped' within her life situation and wanted to improve her own situation while warning her younger sister not to follow a similar pathway. Leanne's sister motivated her to engage with school and gain qualifications. Alongside the influence of her sister, Leanne's changing peer provided success in school which lead to further success and access to higher education (pedagogic effort). These events helped her to translate her dreams of a better life into reality; whether she had enough to overcome the impact of poverty to change the course for further generations in her family is yet to be seen.

Becky's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a,3,3
Key stage 2 results	5b,5a,5b
Key stage 3 results	6c,6a,6c
Key stage 4 Results	3xA*, 4xA, 3xB
Key stage 5 Results	
University/Training	
CATS Score Mean SAS	122
CATS Score Mean verbal	120
CATS Score Mean Quantative	120
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	122
Jesson Rating	High
Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	office/semi-skilled
Father's occupation	
Acorn Economic Group	Moderate means
IDACI	0.177
Free School Meals	yes
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	owner occupied
Family Size	1+1
Position in siblings	1st
Parental status	Single/married
local extended family	One grandparent

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	GCE/CSE
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	School
Homework	at home
attendance at school	94%
Career aspiration	Business Management

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	play games
Relationship to staff	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	grandfather
Parents read to them	yes
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	no
Eat as a family	Weekends
Holidays/ Days out	visit family

a) Structures

- Family structures

At the start of the research period Becky was living with her mother on the very edge of the estate. Her parents, although still married, were not living together, and this arrangement continued throughout the period of study. While Becky had been in secondary school, her mother had become ill, and remained in the home an increasing amount of time leaving Becky to take a more adult role in the home and care for her mother. Becky was the only student within the research cohort who was a young carer.

Becky's family structure also differed slightly from the majority of the others in the research group. Having been born in the area, within a family with a strong history in the area the family had broken apart and her grandparents, who she had been close to, had moved away to live in a coastal area in southern England. Unlike the other students in the research group Becky spoke little of her wider family with her focus on her relationship with her mother.

- Family background

Her mother appeared to have had a fairly responsible job in a local office but Becky was reluctant to speak a great deal about either of her parents. Becky's father worked with computers but she was unclear where he worked or lived. During the research period he did not feature in her life or attend school functions.

Becky's economic situation was rather mixed but reflected the fact that her mother was suffering ill health. Her IDACI index was the highest in the group, the family was classed as having moderate means, they lived in an owner-occupied house, but she was the only one in the research group who was receiving free school meals, and had since she started her secondary education.

- Educational progress

Becky had the strongest academic record of all the students in the research group, and was classed by the school as being gifted and talented. She had a strong academic record since entering primary education, achieving high grades at key stage 1, 2, 3 and then at GCSE level. Her CAT scores showed she had good potential and throughout her educational history she had achieved well.

"I think I got all 3's and then all 5s, but I don't really remember a lot about them. I just remember that I found things quite easy from an early age, and have always seemed to pick things up easily. I was always good at reading and this helped. I liked to read absolutely anything and everything... When I was in year

4, me and another girl, we went into a year 5 class to do maths, we were the only ones who did this. I was also in all the higher groups all the time and on the highest reading books as I have always liked to read a lot. I read year 5 and 6 books when I was in year 3.”

Becky achieved well at GCSE, although she had moved away from the purely academic subjects and studied Business Studies, achieving the best grades in this course and was awarded the prize at the graduation ceremony for the highest achieving student in this subject area. Becky made the decision not to remain in the school sixth form but to move to the local sixth form college. Her plans however changed, and she did not start there in the September, instead she moved to the local further education (FE) college and took a part-time diploma in business. Becky was now spending a great deal of time with her mother. At the end of the two years at the FE College, Becky had completed some but not all the credits required for her full course. She was working part-time as a waitress in a local bar.

b) Key practices influencing Becky’s academic success

- Language development

While Becky had attended primary school her mother and father worked long hours and she spent a great deal of time with her maternal grandparents. At the end of the school day her grandmother would collect Becky from school and she ate evening meals with her grandparents. At weekends her mother and father did eat with her and this was a chance for family discussion. While at the secondary school Becky’s world became focused on her mother and conversation opportunities changed, Becky had become the main carer for her mother and conversation focused around her new role.

- Reading practices within the home

There were aspects of Becky’s family life in the past that showed practices which may have had a positive impact upon her academic success. As a young child Becky had plenty of access to a wider variety of books and her parents and grandparents both read to her and modelled good reading to her.

“...we use the library a lot. My friends always thought I was a bit strange because I liked to visit the library after school, they said why are you always reading, reading is so boring. I am a really fast reader as I like to know what happens and people say I am only skimming it but I am not I am just very fast and seem to always have been. I think reading has helped be a lot to get ahead... I have liked history books, and I did read all the horrible histories when

I was younger, but generally I like to read fiction. I think these help my imagination a lot and that has been good for literature.”

“As a person I pick things up quickly as I am quite a good learner. When I was younger my mum would play lots of games with me. I remember one which we called the hand up game, as it was the first one to put your hand up. Mum would ask a lot of maths questions. My cousin was a bit older so better than me so that meant I tried even harder, but mum said I was better than her for my age. I also have always done my homework with mum and I think a lot of my friends don’t do theirs. If they do they would just scribble it down or copy it off one of their friends.”

- Wider family experiences and holidays

As a child Becky had taken annual holidays with her mother, father and grandparents, generally within England to seaside locations. She had been abroad once to Spain and stayed on a leisure resort seeing little of the local environment. Since the separation of her parents she had not taken holidays and remained within the local area. Visits to her grandparents had also been restricted due to the ill-health of her mother.

c) Key dispositions influencing Becky’s academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Becky achieved well through all key stages up until key stage 5, where her progress had taken a dramatic change. At the end of year 11 she moved away from the local school environment. During her secondary education years, her mother became a recluse and her grandparents moved away; Becky lost all her formal child/parent relationships. As Becky moved closer to adulthood the boundary between mother and child was blurred. Becky spoke fondly of her relationship with her mother: “...*mum and I do every night [eat together], we cook together. We do a lot together really we are really close.*” Becky’s mother also placed a great emphasis on the importance of her relationship with her daughter over that of her friends;

“...Becky does not spend much time with them, she likes to be home, they come round occasionally, but she says they are too busy doing things that she is not interested in and she would rather be at home with me. We spend plenty of time together we like each other’s company. We are more like friends.”

(Becky’s mother)

Becky’s family situation had seen a dramatic shift in its course, moving from a two parent family living locally to her extended family, to now being part of a single parent family; isolated

from her extended family. In the past her mother's poor health had been compensated by the presence of her grandparents who took a fairly strict line with Becky, and who attended school functions when her mother was too ill to attend. The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain (Gordon et al, 2000) outlined the effect of living within a family coping with disability; the impact of living with a parent who is experiencing long term ill-health impacts upon a child in a similar way.

The students in this research have shown characteristics similar to those Brown (1986) classed as "getting out", showing a determination to break the cycle and move out of their current social/economic grouping they saw their family trapped within. However, Becky although gifted did not display the same intrinsic 'fight' as the others and appeared to show greater alignment to those Brown classed as the ordinary kids, those "getting on", going through the motions of the education system, allowing the world around them to happen and being content with the outcomes.

- Choice of school

The choices that Becky's parents made in relation to her educational success seem similar to the parents of Brown's (1986) 'ordinary kids', happy to follow the crowd and imitate the decisions made by the majority on the estate.

"Yes I went to the local nursery, mum worked locally and my grandparents took me. We could walk to the primary school which had a good reputation then; when all the change happened I was already settled and could walk to this school. Mum has thought about changing school but there are no places now at the one we want and the other one is no better than here."

Unlike middle class parents, although her mother was aware that the secondary school her daughter went to was underperforming and could affect her educational opportunities, she did not apply to another school or appeal against places offered (Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995).

- Peer group

Throughout her primary and secondary education Becky had a small group of friends who shared a higher than average academic ability. She was involved in some school clubs and sports teams but had always been on the fringe of these social groups.

During year 11 Becky's 'fringe standing' changed and she started to mix with a variety of her peers and attended parties locally with her friends; however this change was short lived and by the end of year 11 this pattern of behaviour had stopped and she had become estranged

from the rest of the year group. Becky further increased the distance between herself and her peers by attending the FE College where very few of her peers attended.

- School

Of the CATs scores of the students in the year group of this research cohort, Becky had the highest grades and this was recognized by the school, providing for her a gifted and talented programme in partnership with a local public school. The partnership between the two schools offered opportunities for the public school students to gain experience working with children on the estate through sports clubs, a paired reading scheme with the primary school pupils, and an exchange programme for the secondary and sixth form students. The partnership also arranged for a few gifted and talented students from the secondary school to join the public school's acceleration programme, which provided a wider variety of courses after school and guest lectures/workshops. Becky joined this programme and was the only one in her year group to do so.

"I have been on the G&T programme but I don't think this has really helped with my examinations as they don't do the same subjects. I quite liked it in year 9 when I went, but lately I have not really wanted to go as we get back really late and I don't like that."

Becky and her mother stressed the natural ability that Becky had and that she had achieved well due to this personal ability and not because what the school, or even her family had done. Becky remained disconnected from school life and although had friends within school, she was to some degree isolated from her peer group. Becky acknowledged that she had taken part in school-based activities, and had positive experiences in school but was adamant that her achievement was down to her hard work and natural ability not anything else. Evans (2006) stressed that the attitude she encountered with working class families although wanting the best for their children took no credit for making this happen. Although explained in a different way Becky and her mother portray this view, stating that it was more by chance that Becky had done well throughout school rather than any practices which the family had carried out or influence the school had upon her.

"I have worked hard; others have not and don't seem to care. I have some good teachers, especially my maths teacher, and my business studies teacher. I have liked doing the Gifted and Talented programme [with the local public school] and we have visited the school on special days, but I prefer the special lectures and when the tutor comes here."

Power and Whitty (2006) argue that even when a school places a student on a gifted and talented programme the full access to the academic world is not fully opened up to the working classes and the purely academic courses are preserved for the middle classes. The research school allowed a free choice of subjects to be selected at key stage 4 by all students and the English Baccalaureate was only followed by a low percentage of students; this was not a pathway fostered by the school. Allowing the brightest students to follow vocational courses was deemed appropriate, if this was what the student chose to do. In contrast the country's top public schools do not offer BTEC Business Studies to its students. This is an example of the differing standards applied in our education system. Even the curriculum offered has underlying different expectations for the classes. What is offered to the working class students is seen as inappropriate for many middle and upper class students.

- Future career and higher education choices

The high expectation at an early age of Becky's mother that she would achieve in education had a major impact upon her; but this changed while she was in the upper secondary school years. The removal of her father from the family home, and the increasing isolation of her mother as her grandparents moved away, culminated in a shift in both Becky's and her mother's expectations for her future. Having the presence of key attributes in her early childhood did not appear to have been strong enough to overcome the pendulum swing. When Becky was interviewed during year 11, she was on course for gaining top GCSE results and she spoke highly of the motivation provided by her mother. Without this motivation or support from a structured school environment the positive achievement she was on course to achieve did not come to fruition.

"I really like to be pushed and feel that if I am not that I will not do it. The push comes from both home and school. My parents they are quite.... My mum has good expectations for me. Sometimes I don't like this and I react but I do really like it. Sometimes if my teachers are not pushing me I might ask them if I can do some more or harder work. But this makes me different as most of my friends they will not ask for any more work, they just do the easy stuff."

d) Concluding points

The key feature which drove this longitudinal study at its point of origin was a search for the factors that caused some students within the research school to be able to appear to overcome the cycle of educational deprivation experienced by the majority of the white working class population educated within local estate schools throughout the country. The study focused primarily on the success of students at the end of key stage 4, which is the key focus of league

tables and Ofsted grading. Becky's story questions the narrowness of government expectations and those of educationalists, as securing top grades at GCSE does not mean that the cycle of deprivation is interrupted, as the struggles that the working class still need to overcome remain present. It leads further to the question whether or not success at A-levels or even at degree level can overcome these fundamental aspects of our society. Pushing students through an examination process is not the same as allowing education to broaden their horizons and life chances of an individual. A better measure of successful schools would be related to the outcomes of their students five or ten years beyond their school life. This type of measure would show the true educational value provided rather than the artificial and random measures centred on GCSE results.

Billy's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a,2a,3
Key stage 2 results	5c,5c,5b
Key stage 3 results	5a,5b,5c
Key stage 4 Results	1xA, 1xB,7xC
Key stage 5 Results	Repeat year 12
University	Postponed to retake school year
CATS Score Mean SAS	90
CATS Score Mean verbal	103
CATS Score Mean Quantative	76
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	92
Jesson Rating	High

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	Degree/A Levels
Choice of School	SEN Department
Yr 9 University Aspiration	No
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on change	Mother
Homework	at home
attendance at school	95%
Career aspiration	Computer Game Design

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Professional
Father's occupation	Office
Acorn Economic Group	Hard Pressed
IDACI	0.298
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Owner-occupied
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	2nd
Parental status	Married
local extended family	Grandparents

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Role Models
Relationship to staff	Little Influence
Relationship to Peers	Medium Influence
Influence of a single person	Hobbies Club
Parents read to them	Mother
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	No
Holidays/ Days out	No

a) Structures

- Family structures

Billy was the youngest child of a family of four, consisting of his mother, father and older brother, three years older than him. Billy lived in a semi-detached house on the edge of the estate which he described in fond terms having awareness that it was a 'nicer' part of the estate. The location was reflected in the IDACI index of 0.298 which was the second highest in the survey group. His home was an owner-occupied, semi-detached house. His mother was a teacher and his father a transport planner. Although both parents had jobs regarded as being of higher socio-economic grouping than the majority of the survey group the family remained within the 'hard pressed' acorn economic group.

- Family background

Billy's father and mother were both educated locally. His mother attended the survey school. Billy described his father as having achieved well in school having passed ten 'O' levels and three 'A' levels at D grade. His father went into transport planning straight from school and remained employed in a local firm. His mother left school at 16 with just five 'O' levels which were all grade D and below. His mother did stress that she had achieved a distinction in typing and it was this qualification that first secured her work. Since leaving school his mother had taken an access course and then an Open University course and had achieved a degree in mathematics. She continued to train via the Graduate Teacher Programme to become a teacher, and worked in the research school where Billy was in the sixth form. Billy's father had been inspired by his wife and also studied with the Open University and had passed 90 credits and was looking to gain a degree with the hope that this would allow him to further his career.

- Educational progress

Billy gained key stage 1 and 2 results that were above average. His progress at secondary school slowed between key stage 2 and 3. He achieved only one sub-level of attainment in English and mathematics and dropped a sub-level in science. Billy was diagnosed as having Autism Spectrum Disorder at the end of his primary education and did find the change to a larger school more difficult than his peers. His above national average results at the end of key stage 2 gave him the projected target of being in the 'High achievement' category (Jesson, 2006). This was not however, in line with the CATs scores where Billy gained 90 placing him at the bottom of the 'average' range (90-100). Billy had a higher than average verbal reasoning (103), average non-verbal reasoning (92) and well below average score for quantitative reasoning (76).

b) Key practices influencing Billy's academic success

- Language development

Billy's family spent time together every weekend enjoying family meals as well as shared time watching television. During the week his family would not always eat together due to working hours or extra curriculum activities he and his brother were involved in. While both his parents were studying the family enjoyed a new thirst for knowledge which was shared and Billy recounted how his father and his brother frequently enjoyed 'off the wall' conversations related to a wide variety of topics, especially science. These conversations he recalled were generated by television programmes his father liked to watch when relaxing in the evening.

- Reading practices within the home

Billy's education was supported by his family through activities in the home. A culture of reading was evident from an early age for Billy whose reading skills flourished although he expressed that he did not have a love of reading.

"We have always had books in our room and when I am bored I still just go and read. My parents read with us when we were at school and at bedtime. I have never really liked reading I have always been ahead of everyone with reading, I read a lot when I was little but I had a reading age much, much higher than everyone else. I think I was reading from the age of two."

Both Billy's parents acted as strong role models for him from an early age as his mother had continued to study at home completing her GCSEs, access course and then her Open University course. The value of personal study and the benefits that were being gained from his mother's studying was clearly evident to him, bringing a change to her working life and additional monetary benefits.

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Billy and his family had experienced only a few holidays, at local seaside locations. They did describe themselves as a close-knit family who spent time together at weekends and enjoyed attending leisure centres and occasionally eating out. Billy's academic achievement was not greatly supported by the wider experiences the family was able to offer him, due to limited time and resources while his parents worked hard to improve their own educational experience which would bring about greater economic change for the family in the long term they believed.

c) Key dispositions influencing Billy's academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Billy's mother stressed how important she felt education was to both her and her children;

"I take it very seriously because of the way I was brought up. I have done things really differently. I made sure that that they always went to school. I wanted them to go to school, to do their best and they knew not to get into any trouble. I think they knew how important education was to me as I was studying all the time they were at secondary school."

(Billy's mother)

Billy had a very strong role model in his mother during his time at secondary school. Billy spoke of how things did change at home when his mother started to study. He described his parents at first as being 'just like everyone else' but how education became much more central to all their lives once his mother was working towards a degree in mathematics to become a teacher.

Jackson and Marsden (1962) in their study of grammar school education and working class children in Huddersfield described the important influence the mother had upon her children's education. They stated that many of these mothers originated from middle class families and had married into the working class. Those who were not were from the upper levels of the working class and had positive experiences of secondary education and were living out their obstructed career longings through their children. Although a strong desire to achieve in education and role modelling of good studying was promoted within Billy's home his mother does not match the findings of Jackson and Marsden in any other way. The over-riding influence did appear to be a disappointment in her own educational experience both within the school and at home and a lack of faith in the system she found her children in. His mother had a desire to change the education system and working within this system was her method to establish change especially for her own children. Both his mother and father did not view their own educational upbringing positively. Billy's mother had not been encouraged to attend school, and at times was actively discouraged from attending. She had received little support to gain formal qualifications. The way she had brought up her own children and her attitude toward education was a 'rebellion' against her family background and especially her mother.

- Choice of school

The importance of education to Billy's mother is shown also in the selection of the school for Billy. His mother was aware that Billy had struggled at the local primary school and had changed schools in Year 5. Billy explained his change of school:

"... because there were a number of issues when the head teacher left. One was with a teacher who had a whistle and in order to get the class's attention would continually blow this. One of the other problems I have is very sensitive hearing and I would wander off when it was too noisy and they lost me once. But when I changed school I stopped being picked on in the playground, it was a nice place."

Billy's mother was so concerned about her son and his education that she changed job and started to work as a teaching assistant at her oldest son's school.

"I was only working part time before and although a TA job is not well paid it was as much as I had been earning, and I had term time working. I was already studying sociology when I started working at the school and this gave me more experience with children who I knew I liked working with. While my eldest was in primary we had paid to get him help and I had really lost faith in the school system. I suppose when I saw the job in the paper I thought there is a job I can go in and see what I can find out to help." (Billy's Mother)

Having 'lost faith in the school system' with her eldest son, Billy's mother was determined to seek the desired support she wished for her youngest son and was seriously concerned about the suitability of the research school for her son until a new Special Educational Needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed. Billy expressed that he did not at first agree with his parents when he started the school and that he did not wish to receive support. However, he did admit that the SENCo had been "*good and [he] did get a lot of support*". Billy stressed that he felt he would not necessarily have received this support if his mother had not been working at the school. Unlike many of the parents within this research Billy's mother took an active role in selecting what she believed to be the best school for her son and was determined that his progress would be rapid, overcoming the problems she perceived he had and ensuring that the educational experience she had endured was not repeated.

- Peer group

To Billy his success academically had been due to three things: his parents, his friends and the 'Hobbies Club'. The Hobbies club was set up by a teacher at the school who particularly

liked board games, making models, and computer games. The SENCo saw this new club as an opportunity to encourage those students with ASD to experience a well-structured 'social experience' which would suit their particular needs. Billy attended and soon found a love for the competitive element found in computer games, *"this was a time when I won things and realised I could achieve... this club gave me a love for competition because I won."* The determination and drive that his mother in particular had shown, making sure that her sons had a better life than she had as a child, was channelled for Billy via the gaming world which he loved to inhabit, fuelling also a determination to succeed in all he did aiding his academic success.

"Gaming features a lot for me, I remember one game which I played many times and always would fail at this particular level but I would come back to this later and would think 'I am going to do this'. I won a worldwide competition that was good and gave me a belief I could win. I just like gaming it is a form of enjoyment but also drives me on. I do use gaming as a method of escapism, as I need that."

- School

Billy started school at the age of three attending the nursery attached to the primary school. He attended three mornings a week which was the amount that the government funded, as the family had no further money to supplement this. He entered the attached primary but changed primary schools in year 5. Billy attended the local secondary school throughout his secondary years but selected to move to the local sixth form college at the end of year 11. The change did not work for Billy and he decided to re-take his first year of A-levels, also changing courses. The unstructured format of the college environment did not suit him.

The school provided for Billy a wider variety of experiences, giving him the special educational support he required, a leisure environment in the Hobbies club to develop friendships and fostered a competitive spirit and provided a number of teachers who understood him and developed positive relationships with him. These allowed Billy to develop confidence and learn to cope with his ASD.

- Future career and higher education choices

In year 9 when the survey group were first interviewed Billy was not interested in attending university and unsure what lay ahead for him. As a sixth former he had the ambition to go to university although was still unsure what to study while having a burning ambition to work as a computer game designer for a major company and perhaps to live in the United States for some time.

“...up until about three months ago I was changing my ideas all the time. For a long time I wanted to go into the military. I had really wanted to go into the Royal Engineers as I thought this would be fixing up tanks and things. But it is not it is more building walls and roads and bridges. There has been a bit of competitiveness as well as some of my mates have dropped out [of sixth form] and are now working in Tesco and I was like ‘no I am better than that.’ I want to see how far I can push myself.”

Billy explained his desire to achieve. His personal views were the result of many years of family based practices and dispositions which now part of his own personality. There was an internal battle that was being played out without full acknowledgement from Billy. He spoke of wishing to move on, to live in an apartment in the United States, but did not see this as a permanent state, rather a dream, an escape similar to that he found in his computer gaming world. At the same time, Billy was fully aware that he wished to remain close to his family and his friends, a trait of his upbringing, part of his working class culture.

“Well obviously missing family and friends even though I pretend to hate my father and if I was away from mum I would still miss her. I would miss some of my friends as I have known them all my life as we grew up together. I also would miss this place as I know this place like the back of my hand. I would go as I know it would not be permanent as I would come back quite frequently, I would live with my parents when I popped back.”

d) Concluding points

Billy like Mark and Ashlee showed the impact of having a role model. This was a mixture of the catalysts of change (Kupfer 2015) of consciousness and pedagogic effort. Having the drive to improve their habitus was coupled with elements of success in school providing the motivation which led to further academic success into higher education. Mark and Billy's stories also illustrate the importance the element of competition had on them both, providing an intrinsic driving force. Mark's competitive drive was fuelled by his father's sporting background and Billy's through the computerised gaming world. Ashlee's and Billy's mother's past created for them a fierce strength to 'right the wrongs of the past' and ensured that their children had a means of 'escape' if they wished to take it. What remained uncertain was why for some of the other children within their year group and living in a cycle of poverty seemed to accept their situation, while others sought a route out and found this in the mechanism of education.

Louise's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a,2a,3
Key stage 2 results	5,4a,5
Key stage 3 results	6c,5b,6a
Key stage 4 Results	3xA,4xB,2xC
Key stage 5 Results	C, Merit & Dist.
University/Training	M&S Retail Store
CATS Score Mean SAS	92
CATS Score Mean verbal	92
CATS Score Mean Quantative	100
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	84
Jesson Rating	High

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	O Levels/A Levels
Choice of School	Good caring School
Yr 9 University Aspiration	No
Yr 12 University Aspiration	May be
Influences on changed decision	School/Friends
Homework	at home
attendance at school	91%
Career aspiration	Not sure

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Office/Semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Office/Semi-skilled
Acorn Economic Group	Moderate Means
IDACI	0.298
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Owner-occupied
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	1st
Parental status	Married
local extended family	No

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Encouragement
Relationship to staff	Medium influence
Relationship to Peers	Medium influence
Influence of a single person	Grandfather/Aunt
Parents read to them	Mother
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	Weekends
Holidays/ Days out	Visit Families

a) Structures

- Family structures

Louise was the eldest daughter in a family of four. She and her 'true' sister were adopted when they were 4 ½ years and 23 months old, having been in foster care since age 3 years old and 7 months old respectively. Louise was aware of her birth parents and had vague memories of her early childhood. Her mother described the birth parents and Louise's early life:

"They [the birth parents] were both class A-drug users. There was some physical abuse as well. That I believe was the final straw as they [the two sisters] were both badly beaten. They had been at risk and on the register for quite a while. There had been many years of neglect by the time the oldest was removed"

(Louise's mother)

A study of attachment disorder behaviour (O'Connor and Rutter, 2000) in Romanian and UK children, who suffered substantial levels of deprivation in the first three years of their life, showed mild to moderate attachment disorder in the children's adolescent life.

"We are still aware that emotionally she is still behind with her peers due to the trouble she had early on in her life. She does have periods of time when she regresses a bit. She is going through one at the minute and so we know she is going to need a lot more parental support. She worries about things more than her peers would. We know that she does not cope well on her own and with strong influences around her we need to watch out."

(Louise's mother)

Louise had worked over many years with a child psychiatrist to manage her behaviour and emotions, and was diagnosed as suffering from attachment disorder. Attachment disorder was first characterized by Bowlby (1969) and later by the work of Ainsworth (1979) as a behavioural disorder that forms due to the deprivation of a child's early experiences and bonding with a parent. Commonly a parent provides for their child a safe haven, which allows the child to explore their world and develop loving, lasting, intimate relationships. Where this experience is lacking the child still develops a coping strategy to explore the world it is within, but this is one which is distant from adults and the care-giver. De Wolff and Van Ijzendoorn (1997) showed that where the parenting of a child was angry and hostile this brought about a general sense of insecurity within the adolescent. Louise's mother acknowledged that she was more persistent than other parents and was seen by teachers and other parents as being *"the baddies and as though because the girls were adopted we have done something, rather than we trying to help out and bring them up well."* An adoptive parent can be viewed by others as being over protective; (Foli & Thompson, 2004) this can be the result of the life changing

experience adoptive parents go through when adopting and their own insecurity of not feeling 'entitled' to parent such a precious being. *"I think when we decided to adopt we knew it was never going to be easy. The issues with the girls are new to us... We just want to be a 'normal' family."*

- Family background

Louise's parents have been married for 26 years; they both worked and had some academic qualifications. Louise's father worked for a computer company as a section manager. He had left school at 15 with just one 'O' Level in English and had worked as a grave digger before entering the RAF at the age of 17, where he was in the armoury on the technical side and learnt his trade while there. Her mother worked in school administration. She had left school at 18 having gained a number of 'O' levels and one 'A' level in domestic science. She worked in a shop when leaving school but became frustrated and applied to join the RAF, which she joined shortly after at the age of 19, where she met Louise's father. Louise's maternal grandparents both were in the RAF and lived in the north of the country, while her paternal grandparents lived in the South West. Her parents moved to the town due to work and adopted Louise and her sister while living there. Unlike others in the research group Louise's extended family did not live locally and the family travelled a lot throughout the year to be with their extended family. Louise's father also did not work locally and due to a promotion travelled at least an hour to work every day. The family had moved off the estate and lived in the northern area of the catchment in a newer estate. There were a few families who were finding they were able to move out of the local neighbourhood, looking for better housing and newer surroundings.

- Educational progress

Louise's academic profile showed that during all key stages she had been above the national average. The family issues she had experienced in her early childhood appear to have had limited impact on her academic development at this stage. When interviewing Louise she spoke briefly about her early childhood.

"I had to learn a lot of stuff when I was at reception to catch up I suppose. But when I was younger I could learn stuff really quickly... compared to my sister, she knew how to even speak French words by the time she started school as she had been to playgroup and nursery."

When further questions were asked related to early childhood the answers became brief and it was clear that she did not wish to explore this further.

Louise's mother spoke about how her daughter coped with her past:

"She has written a letter to her birth mother stating what a struggle her life is on a day to day basis. We were given this letter to read and it really gave us an insight as we really did not know any of this and how she felt about her past."

(Louise's mother)

Her mother did explain that she knew her daughter understood and was proud of what she had achieved but was not always able to express how she felt about personal matters whether good or bad. These are all typical symptoms for an adolescent with attachment disorder. With higher than average key stage 2 scores Louise's prediction for GCSE results were high. She finished key stage 4 with high results at GCSE. However, when comparing her CATs score with her final GCSE point score there was a negative difference in overall ranking showing that others in the group made better progress against their expected achievement than Louise had.

b) Key practices influencing Louise's academic success

- Language development

Although her reading skills were built upon within the home her oral skills appeared to be more limited in their development. Louise spoke about the change in mood in the home since her younger sister became a teenager and how many meals were more silent as a result of the fluctuation in her sister's moods, the family found it easier not to discuss the day. Her mother did acknowledge the change but did point to a comment made by one of Louise's teacher about her having well-formed opinions and oral skills.

"We always eat breakfast together and at weekends we would normally eat together. In the last few years we probably don't have chatty meals, because of the teenage years but especially because of our youngest who has had so many issues more recently."

(Louise's mother)

- Reading practices within the home

Louise showed awareness that her family had supported her throughout her schooling and offered a nurturing environment for her to grow up in. Throughout her education she had strong literacy skills which she acknowledged had been modelled by her father, and supported by her mother. "*I saw my dad [read], not my mum. My mum, she does not really read.*" The family has a large stock of books both fiction and non-fiction. Louise's mother stressed the importance they placed on reading and felt that this had aided her daughter's educational achievement.

“We have a vast number of books in the house. It is always something we have encouraged and both of the girls love to read. When the girls first came to us we would read to them at bedtime every night. We did the reading book with them when it came home from school.” (Louise’s mother)

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Spending time together as a family was viewed as important by Louise’s mother. She was aware that tension in the home made these moments more valued but took every opportunity to make sure her daughters had quality time with their parents.

“The relationship between the two girls is horrendous. But we will all have days out and do things together. We also have the dogs and we go for long walks and sometimes we will chat on these walks. We will watch the news together or listen to the news in the car and this will frequently start up conversations. One of the teachers said about the eldest how nice it was to have a child who has opinions and knew about issues in the world. We also travel as my parents live in the North East and we travel up there, whereas many of the local children here have not been outside the town. We do try to go to a number of places, we have had a holiday aboard every year, but they chat to me when they want to.”

c) Key dispositions influencing Louise’s academic success

- Choice of school

Louise changed school during year 9 and moved into the research school, having been at a neighbouring school. She explained why she had changed schools, *“Because of the good reputation that the teachers had at this school and because some of the courses were modular which meant that you did not have to take all the examinations in one sitting.”* Her mother added to this explanation:

“Due to poor communication we have had a lot of problems and this was all due to who was teaching them, how open minded they were or understanding. We understand that not all teachers will understand about attachment disorder – we hardly know all about our two and we are constantly learning... School would make decisions that we would not want and we would have to tend with the fall out... staff have been very rude to us. Teachers started to not tell us things just because she was a teenager. This made it a battlefield for us between her, the school and us. She started to feel she was untouchable

because the school said she could do things even though they knew we would not like it.”
(Louise’s mother)

This caused a break down between the school and parents which affected the learning of both daughters, resulting in a mid-term change of schools during year 9. At the end of key stage 4 Louise had slightly under performed when compared with those students in the study of similar ability.

- Peer group

In addition to school staff influencing Louise she also acknowledged that her friends had played a role in her success.

“My friends have been a bit of both: distraction and encouragement. I can sit in the common room for a long time and just talk, but we can also have talks about more intellectual things and work that I am doing, we help each other with homework and if we have a question about our work we are all happy to go and ask a question about it.”

Louise’s mother viewed her friendships differently, aware that her daughter had attachment issues;

“Their friends, well they don’t really have any, unfortunately. Over the years [she] has had groups of friends, they are normally an odd mixture of people. But she never is one for meeting up with them or bringing them around to the house, we would have to say to her why not bring someone around, or go to the pictures with your friends, she will only do this when we suggest it. She has had more friends since she has been at this school. I think they have accepted her more.”

- School

Louise’s mother stressed that since changing schools and attending the local community school, the pupils who attended the school are more similar to her daughter and therefore she was accepted into the group more. She also explained that the teachers were more able and used to coping with students with a number of issues and so her daughter was not singled out. Evans (2006) drew comparisons between racism and what she classed as ‘placism’. She had noticed that outsiders were not welcome within the white working class community on the estate she studied. A person who even held middle-class values, even if married to an ‘estate member’, was never going to be truly accepted into the community. The defence of the place and the way of life of the people was what formed the kinship and residency criteria and was

non-negotiable. Louise's mother argued that her daughter had settled into the local school better than she had into her previous school. Previously they had selected a school beyond the estate but at the local school the teachers and ethos of the school were more closely matched to the culture of working class.

Louise's choice of which 'A' levels she would take was not totally influenced by her GCSE grades. The underlying beliefs of her parents played a critical role in the selection of her courses at Key stage 5.

"We have not pushed her in any particular way. Our eldest is not sure what she wanted to do we have tried to steer her...She is now studying Public Services, Health and Social Care, and English literature. She has not until recently said anything about going to university, but is thinking about this now, but I think that is the influence of the sixth form as they are all thinking about that now and she is easily led along...She chose the courses for sixth form as we thought it would give her a good flavour of the world of work and academic studies."

(Louise's mother)

Her parents believed that by Louise studying a mixture of BTEC vocational courses and one A-level course this would allow her to experience a wider breadth of education while still leaving her options open (Perrucci et al, 2006). In reality their lack of experience of university and the types of courses required to enter a university meant that her options for entering university had been greatly reduced, as top universities require three top graded A-levels or BTEC distinctions. Marshall (2002) argued that middle class parents were more likely to select more academic studies for their children having an attitude of 'education for education sake', and were not as concerned about the vocational outcome being linked directly to the educational choices made. Louise's mother voiced her concern about Louise moving to university. She stated that her daughter had not thought about it before the school introduced the concept to her and that she was easily led. New experiences that Louise had at school added to her cultural capital and possibly took her beyond that of her parents. Parents who have not been to university may not have an understanding of the total value of the experience and view higher education only from the possible economic gain (Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009). Louise's mother felt that another career pathway, not requiring a degree level qualification would be more suitable for her daughter and therefore appeared to be against Louise's wish to go to university.

- Future career and higher education choices

Louise showed that she had thought about university and showed an interest in university especially to train to teach.

“I like Edinburgh, as I would quite like to go to a university in Scotland; I also like Buckinghamshire University, that one looks good. I think I would like to go to university, the more we have heard about it recently and having had the chance to gain work experience with the younger children, has been good.”

Louise was aware how her views about university conflicted with those of her parents:

“My choices are to stay on in education and read English and Education at university to be a teacher, or to go and join the Royal Air Force. My parents have a huge influence on this and what I will do...I don't think they think you really need university, they see it as a great big debt. I would not say they were really pro university, they are more in favour of you going into a job where you can work your way up.”

It is not uncommon to hear this attitude from working class parents who have experienced the need to work to provide for themselves or contribute toward their family from school leaving age. Evans (2006) wrote of a similar example of Tracey who wished to go to college as her teachers had told her to do but her mother said she must pay her way from the age of 16 and therefore would not continue to support her in full time education. The Labour Government in 2004 introduced the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which provided a weekly payment for students in full time education whose parents earned below a particular level of income. For a few years this payment freed some working class students from this pressure from their parents and allowed 16-19 year olds to remain in education. A 5.9% increase of students was seen from this eligible group (BBC news 2004). In 2010 the EMA was withdrawn in England as part of the government spending cuts. Louise expressed that part of the reason for her parents not wishing her to go to university was due to concerns about money and debt; *“The money is part of the reason, but even if it was just £3K I am not too sure that mum would still feel OK.”* Louise's mother expressed her concerns related to the trauma of her daughter's past and how this would restrict her future decisions:

“I think that there is a real fear that she would not cope if she was away from us, she would just cut herself off from everything, so she is just not ready yet to be so independent. If she does go to university she will probably do something in [the town] and living at home. We can take it step by step towards greater independency.”

(Louise's mother)

Having an expectation to stay on at school post 16 is more traditionally viewed as a middle class value than a working class one (Rose, 2001). UCAS data (2008) showed that 17.5% of students at university were from families whose parents worked in routine or semi-routine occupations i.e. working class occupations, rather than managerial or professional careers (which would be more in line with a middle-class family). University to Louise's parents was a new world which caused her mother anxiety. Her mother rationalised her anxiety as what was in the best interest for their daughter. The school was promoting values that her parents did not fully concur with. Louise's mother battled with the fear of separation between mother and child if her daughter attended university, together with her fear of her child's and her worlds becoming separated as Louise became more educated than her parents (Etkin, 1993). Halsey (1972) argued that the schools were at fault for separating working class children from their parents as the schools values failed to match those of the working class parents but instead attempted to force them to change.

Concluding points

Louise did have a number of advantages created by her parents and their family life which other children within the research school did not experience. Having an extended family beyond the estate and taking regular holidays abroad had provided for her a wider experience of places and different cultures. The family had access to resources and had been able to provide books, and day trips (Jackson and Marsden, 1962, viewed this as 'coming from upper working class'). As a family they did discuss current news and their daily lives. Louise's parents created a stable home life for their children since adoption. The importance of the role her parents had in her education was well understood by Louise, but she also knew the importance of a school where she could feel relaxed and was able to work without too much pressure.

"My mum always pushes me to do well all the time and also [I have succeeded] because I have good teachers and I get on with most of them well."

What differed in particular from the majority of the other students in the research was Louise's acceptance of her family's aspirations for her. Louise completed her time in Key stage 5 and opted for a training position with Marks and Spencer retail store in the local town. The others who had aspirations to go to university had gone even if this was beyond the family's prior experience. Louise summed up her wishes for her life as wanting 'happiness'.

"That I am happy doing what I am doing in life; happy with my job. If I am not happy then I will know that I have not done with my life what I wanted to do... if I achieve the things that I plan to do this is success but this could change and this could still lead to me having success."

The research group's parents had a common desire for their children that they did well in life that they achieved more than their parents had achieved (Sheridan, 2000 2001). The influence of the mother (Gregg & Goodman, 2010) was seen to be strongest with Ashlee, Billy and Louise. Louise's mother's desire was, however, clouded and probably influenced by the attachment issues related to her daughter's neglect as a young child before being adopted. The desire to protect and not allow her daughter to leave the safety of the family remained too strong to overcome her aspirations for her child. Ashlee's, Billy's and Mark's parents all showed a desire that they would have loved to have attended higher education themselves and although they acknowledged they had worked hard to provide for their family they knew that with better education a different life may have been available and they aspired to give these life choices to their child (Sheridan, 2000). Louise's parents appeared not to have these deep beliefs and were pleased with their choice to train in the RAF. They held the belief that learning a trade, earning and working your way up through a trade, was their aspiration. The world of higher education sat beyond their scope and comprehension, they had not predicted this experience for their daughter (Mare & Chang, 1998).

Louise's success had predominately resulted from her personal drive for survival, her mother spoke of how she learnt from an early age to survive and this had given her greater resilience and a drive to achieve more developing her own self-belief. This had been nurtured by her adoptive parents by giving her a safe home environment where wider education skills had been fostered. School had played an important role in offering different opportunities from home as well as challenging the beliefs held by the family. Although this conflict led to a change in school, the change brought about a more relaxed working environment for Louise who felt she was more accepted by her peers, and worked with teachers who were easy to talk to and showed that they cared for her as an individual while encouraging her to think about higher education.

"It has been a mix of both [home and school] I don't think that one has been more important than the other...I suppose I was quite determined to do well myself as well but having these folk around has really helped."

Sam's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2a,2c,2b
Key stage 2 results	4a,4c,4c
Key stage 3 results	5a,4a,5c
Key stage 4 Results	3xA*, 7xB, 1xC
Key stage 5 Results	A,A,B
University/Training	Leicester
CATS Score Mean SAS	90
CATS Score Mean verbal	99
CATS Score Mean Quantative	91
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	80
Jesson Rating	Above

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	GCE/CSE
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	English Teacher
Homework	at home
attendance at school	95%
Career aspiration	Police/teacher

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Office/semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	moderate means
IDACI	0.298
Free School Meals	No
House Type	detached
Rented or owner occupied	owner occupied
Family Size	2+1
Position in siblings	1st
Parental status	Married
local extended family	yes

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	encouraged /helped
Relationship to staff	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Primary school teacher
Parents read to them	yes
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	yes
Holidays/ Days out	yes

a) Structures

- Family Structure

Sam was an only child and lived in his owner occupied home with his mother and father. His father was a self-employed builder generally working locally having built up a good reputation for his business. Sam's mother was a Personal Assistant as well as the firm's accountant for a small family run business that had relocated to the neighbouring county. His mother had worked for the business for a long time and decided to travel daily rather than change her job. Sam had a number of his extended family members still living within the town. He had a close relationship with his grandparents especially his maternal grandmother who he saw frequently.

- Family Background

Sam's mother and father met at school and had now been married for over twenty-five years. They were educated locally and had lived within the community throughout their lives.

"We left school at 16 with a few examinations but not much, I went back to night classes at a later date so that I could get qualifications in accounting to get on within my job. My husband worked as an apprentice and has learnt his trade that way and has qualifications in building."
(Sam's mother)

His parents' educational history was typical. Having gained few examinations but keen to improve their life opportunities for themselves and their son they had worked at evening classes, or on day release while working as an apprentice to gain the qualifications required to move on career wise. The family had a strong work ethic and held passionately to the belief that if you work hard in life, you have a better lifestyle but you also have greater opportunities to enjoy life more fully and to be happy. Sam's mother had a deep longing for her family to be well cared for and to be happy, and was willing to work hard to achieve this.

Sam's parents saw that although they had not been able to benefit greatly from school based education they knew that gaining good qualifications allowed for wider choice in career and therefore hopefully a fuller life of opportunities; his parents had therefore been determined to ensure that he gained from his schooling years.

"Yes he went to both [a playgroup and a nursery], I was keen for him to be ahead of the game and do as well as he could, we saw education as important for him, as it gives you choices."
(Sam's mother)

What is distinctive about Sam's story was the belief that had developed within his parents of the importance of providing for their son: a good education, a firm and secure home and as many different experiences of life as they could provide and afford.

- Educational progress

Sam's academic profile throughout most of his schooling did not show a particular flair for educational study. At the end of Key stage 1 he was above average in English, average in science and slightly below average in mathematics. A similar pattern was maintained throughout key stage 2 and 3, with mathematics and science dipping against his above average skills in English. There was a distinctive pattern of change with his key stage 4 results, as he moved into the second highest category for GCSE results by achieving, 11 examinations, 3 A*, 7B grades and a C grade pass in mathematics. It was however, possibly his mathematics grade that he worked the hardest to pass.

“Sam had to work really hard to get his maths GCSE, as he needed a B grade if he was to do the A levels courses he wanted. He did not work well with his maths teacher so he and his dad worked together every night with the maths to ensure he got it. He had a friend who was really good at maths and his dad would phone him up if they got stuck and his friend would explain how to do it to his dad and then they would work together on it.”

(Sam's mother)

At the age of 14 Sam had no ambition to go to university. No one in his family had attended. However, by the age of 16 he knew that he wanted to gain A-levels and many of his friends were planning to continue their studies. Sam was keen to move to the local sixth form college to continue studying rather than remaining at the local school.

Sam's process was strengthened during Key stage 5 and his results of two A grades and one B allowed him entry into a top university, selecting the University of Leicester to read single honours English literature. The university was recommended to him by his English teacher who had been instrumental throughout his sixth form course in motivating Sam to apply for university.

b) Key practices influencing Sam's academic success

- Reading and Language Development

Sam grew up in a household which had a love for learning and this influenced his passion for reading and desire to study English at A level and at University. *“They [his parents] like to read and I think they have always done so, so this probably was an influence on me and why I like to read so much.”*

A plentiful supply of books was available for Sam to access throughout his childhood, and his parents actively modelled reading to him, both through their personal love of literature and the

regular practice of reading to their son, both for pleasure and in support of his school homework tasks. Sam's mother equated the practice of regular reading to their son as a sign of good parenting. Although this may not have been part of their own childhood experiences they desired this for their own son. *"From a baby we both have read to Sam. We tried not to have the telly on too much and we read or played games, we really wanted to be good parents."* Sam's mother showed awareness that reading and playing games with one's child was not the 'norm' within their cultural background, but they had been able to fit these practices into their daily lives and therefore turned aspirations for their child into concrete practices. His mother continued to translate her aspirations into practice as she encouraged Sam to complete his homework.

"I would read with them when I brought my reading books home from school and just loved to read new books on my own. When I came home from school I would do my homework on the dining room table. Mum would be around normally in the kitchen and would encourage me and help me out or check things for me."

Accompanying the strong influence of reading and studying at home, Sam's family spent 'quality time' together every evening. Eating together as a family around a table allowed Sam to experience conversations daily. He had plenty of opportunity to verbalise his thoughts about his day and to engage in discussions related to topical family matters or national and world news. *"We have always eaten our evening meal together and chatted about the day we have had."*

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Having quality time as a family did not stop at meal times for Sam and his family; each weekend time was set aside for visits and the family placed emphasis on having holidays together. Sam spoke of the time he spent with his parents:

"Yes at weekends we have always done things together, dad and I would go to the football together with his mates as well, but as a family we would do something together like bike rides, walks, visiting new towns and places. We like to have meals out together now as well."

"We have always been on holidays in this country and abroad. We like to do fun activities as well as just resting in the sun, or visiting interesting places. We also go on lots of days out and although mum and dad do lots of activities together without me now I still do join up with them and visit towns, stately

homes, fairs, etc. We do like to try new things as a family and I think mum and dad have encouraged me to do new things rather than just staying where I am.”

Sam acknowledged that now he had grown up he did other activities with his own peers and had developed his own interests. His mother supported the view of a child being able to develop their own individuality while still maintaining close links with the family.

“Sam does some of the activities now but he does some of his own things now. I believe that it is important for a child to have fun, this is what moulds your children.”
(Sam’s mother)

Sam’s mother’s concluding point here, on what had recurred, was mentioned by other parents. Allowing their children to have ‘fun’ or to be ‘happy’ appeared to be a critical aspect they believed, linking to the success of their children. Where enjoyment and a fulfilled life was viewed in a holistic way leading to ‘fun’ or ‘happiness’ which sustained or developed reoccurring opportunities, these students seemed to have been able to convert their enriched activities/opportunities into academic success. Instead of seeking only immediate gratification in activities, which was favoured by the masses to provide the ‘happy’ moment. Sam illustrated the way different experiences can provide educational enrichment to life and provide ‘happiness’, drawn from time spent with his family, together developing new knowledge and skills.

c) Key dispositions influencing Sam’s academic success

There is a growing body of research on the influence of aspirations and expectations. Throughout the interviews a common theme observed was the desire of students and their parents to do well and succeed in life. The critical change catalyst that moved parental and student aspirations from mere words had been the ability to implement small stepped actions which consistently moved toward shifting the balance, from hopes and dreams to reality. Although passionately wanted, parental aspirations were not truly believed in. They were unlikely to be implemented without shifting the cultural capital of the family dramatically; changing the very fabric of a family’s existence was either not wanted or not believed to be possible.

“I hope we as parents have influenced him as well. I would not dream to push him into anything. Young people need to live life and to live their dreams not mine. I believe that you can always come back into education but you need to take opportunities and live life now. We never really considered that Sam would go to university so we were not pushing him to go. I think we thought he would finish his A-levels and go on and get a job and earn a living.” (Sam’s mother)

A middle class child, who had followed their parents and attended university and gained a degree, would not necessarily believe they were pushed into doing something. It was the natural pathway to gain A-levels, go to university and then seek a profession; the average trajectory of a middle class child. This is in comparison to the trajectory of the typical working class child, who would finish school, aged 16 or if doing particularly well with their studies leave at 18.

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Sam attended the local pre-school and primary school and was greatly influenced by one male primary school teacher. Sam remained in contact with his primary school teacher throughout secondary education and spent some time on work experience with him. This male teacher had a major impact on Sam's choice of a career to become a primary school teacher.

"He had a really good start at primary school especially with one male teacher who was really important to him. This teacher was really sporty and encouraging to the pupils especially to the boys. I think he has really inspired him to do really well at school. He has kept in touch with him and recently did his work experience with him in the primary school. I think he was a really good role model for my son and some of the other boys, it is unusual to have a male primary teacher but this was so important to Sam."

(Sam's mother)

This positive role model was further built upon when Sam entered into his sixth form. Two of his English teachers encouraged him and enabled him to have the belief that a career as a teacher would be possible, as they enabled him to apply to university, supporting his parents and him throughout the application process.

"When he went into the sixth form there were two English teachers there, one the Head of Year and the other the Deputy Head teacher. These two teachers have really influenced Sam. They did a lot of creative writing and Sam is good at this and they have encouraged him and recognised that he is really good at English and this is the first time since primary school that someone had told him and encouraged him to go to University. They said that he should try for Oxford or Cambridge as he was bright enough but he did not wish to do that, he did not think he would fit in there."

(Sam's mother)

The two English teachers were able to influence Sam's choice of university and although he felt that Oxford or Cambridge was not for him, they were able to promote top universities, rather than the local ones and Sam secured a place to read single honours English at the

University of Leicester. Sam was keen to attend university and gain qualifications that would allow him to work in a career that paid well and offered a degree of security as well as professional progression. He was aware that this moved him away from the world of work his parents experienced.

“When I worked with dad I realised how hard he has had to work to get the things they have. I want the same in my life, but realised that if I can get a job that pays well, that I would like to do, I will not have to do the physically hard work for the very long hours like dad has done. I know that I do not want to be like some of the lads that I have gone to the same school as I went to and ended up going nowhere. I want to be in travelling distance to home but I don’t like to live and work here anymore.”

Having had alternative role models to those of his parents, Sam was able to marry up the belief system held by his parents and see that these things can be achieved in different ways and that education was the key that opened up these opportunities.

- Choice of school

Sam attended the local school. Although Sam and his parents were aware that it was a struggling school it was important to them that he maintained his friendship groups and attended the local school that was the regular pattern for local people who lived in the community. Being with his friends was the overriding factor which his parents believed would provide the happiest situation for their son. Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995) showed that the child’s happiness was the overriding factor for one group of parents making decisions on choice of schools.

“...it was the local one and all his friends were going to attend, he would be happy there, he would be able to get to school fairly easily and we quite liked the school, everybody around went there.” (Sam’s mother)

The importance of friendship groups in the selection of a school illustrates a stark difference between working class and middle class attitudes to academic success. The academic performance of a school holds more importance as a deciding factor over friendship groups for middle class families when selecting a school place. Middle class families with higher mobility hold a number of social friendship groups within the school, clubs and leisure activities they attend, and their family contacts create for the middle class child a wider friendship group, and therefore school friends do not play such as an important influencing factor. Middle class parents add weight to the school reputation and its ‘name’ being

important for later educational decisions. Decisions made by parents when selecting schools reinforces social segregation (Gibbons, 2001).

- Peer group

Both Sam and his mother commented how it was easy to follow what appears to be the 'norm' for teenage boys within a working class environment: "*he did what most of the lads did and wanted to hang around the streets.*" Sam's mother showed that they had to go against the cultural norms and needed to be seen as firm and not allow him to follow his peer group's actions. Feeling uncared for by his school may have caused Sam and his peers to disengage from their schooling for a period of time.

"When Sam was in the lower secondary he did what most of the lads did and wanted to hang around the streets. We have been quite firm parents and have not let him do all the same things as those of his same age. His friends have been generally good for him and they have worked well together at school. They have enjoyed sport together."

(Sam's mother)

Coleman's (1959) work on academic achievement and the structure of competition supports the argument suggested by Sam's mother, and a view which was held by his family. Sam was driven by a strong desire to compete and to win. Similar to the experience shown in Mark's story, competition within the medium of sport was the factor that linked Sam and his peers into the school world.

"I was in a group of lads who were really competitive, competition has always been important to me especially winning; to me second place is first loser so it has always been stressed to me about winning. Our group was all quite intelligent and driven by ego, and I never wanted to be the one who was not doing something."

"I think Sam has been quite driven by an element of competition between his friends. We have always said that competition is a good thing and we never, as he was growing up, just let him win something. No! He, his dad and I would truly have a competition and that was a good thing, and drove us all forward."

(Sam's mother)

Sam was able to use the drive he gained from competition, which started with his school sports and then moved into his academic studies to gain the motivation he required, especially when away from the role models he experienced in primary school and Sixth Form College.

Negative role model images also played a part in influencing decisions made by Sam. He saw his peer group and those slightly older remain in the local community with few prospects and lack of money and low quality of life.

“Friends were important, but also seeing those around me of my age and older who were doing nothing with their lives, boys who left our school and did no work, did not get jobs or get boring jobs and all they did was go to the pub and I just knew I did not want to be doing that when I was forty.”

- School

Sam reflected on his experience in the school and felt that being with his friends had helped but attending the local school with them had not created the ‘happiness’ his parents had desired for him.

“I never really felt the staff at my school really cared for me. We never really had much homework. My maths teacher told my parents at a parents’ evening that I would get an A grade. But then we had the mock and I only got a U. The teacher did not seem to care for a group of us who struggled with maths. He was a genius at maths, the teacher, and worked really well with those who were really good at maths. But for those of us working towards the C grade he just gave us exercises to do and we sat together in a corner and worked and then just marked our work from the textbook. He worked with all the rest and not with us. But I knew that I needed maths if I was to go to university and so Dad worked with me. He does not have his exam but he uses maths a lot at work and so we would work together through the revision books. If we needed help dad would ask a friend who would explain to dad and then he would help me.”

The strong message that was being portrayed by Sam was that he felt uncared for by the school. He saw himself as not being one of the bright children, unable to engage in the lesson even though he wanted to achieve his GCSE in mathematics. Whether or not the teacher was attempting to engage with all his students the end result was that Sam felt that his teacher did not care, and that really he did not know his students very well. Sam heard at a parents’ evening that he was doing well. This might have meant he did not feel that he therefore needed to work hard, but he was not being inspired to achieve a high grade. His father showed a great determination for him to achieve and, although his mother had examinations in accountancy, mathematics was seen more as a subject that he and his father could work on. Together they worked hard and when required asked for help from one of Sam’s friends. Sam achieved the

C grade required for entering his sixth form college to study A-levels, but also essential if he was to achieve his goal of becoming a primary school teacher.

“I found school quite boring, the lessons up to GCSE were boring and I never really worked very hard. I could do the work as it was easy so we did it quickly and then we could mess around which make the time pass a little quicker.”

Engaging boys in education is well researched (Younger & Warrington, 2005) and a pattern for boys' underachievement has been heavily documented over the past two decades (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1999; Jackson 2003, 2009; Evans 2006; Reay 2006a; Kingdon & Cassen 2007; DFE, 2009). Attending a school which was failing to meet the needs of all its pupils meant for Sam that he was being unchallenged. Sam could have become yet another student in a 'failing school' to underachieve and not reach even the national government benchmark of 5 A*-C grades (including English and mathematics). The research school had moved rapidly from 4% - 40% (5 A*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics) but this still meant over half of the students every year were leaving without having achieved the national average level of qualifications. Having inspiring, high quality teachers, who were able to deliver the highest calibre of teaching and learning; who related well to their students, was of course an important element for raising standards in education. However, Sam showed that if a teacher showed they cared for their students this could help to engage and promote better learning. Fried (2001) argued that engaging well with students required a 'Passionate Teacher', one who was passionate about their subject, cared about issues facing the world they lived in, or had a passion for the students to be well educated, and provided for. Sam complained how the school made promises and failed to deliver.

“School set up a gifted and talented club for us and we all went along but apart from doing a few Sudoku puzzles we never did anything so we stopped going. The school was always promising things and then it never seemed to happen. We felt as though they did not really care about us.”

- Future career and higher education choices

Sam's mother said how she expected her son to complete A-levels and then to go and find a job, an expectation which for many working class families had already exceeded the 'norm' by remaining in education post 16. This expectation, however, was in contrast to those of the middle class, which was becoming a 'norm' among the students in the research who had copied the 'middle class' expectations. Evans (2006) wrote that for a typical working class

family a university education was unachievable and the need for a 16 year old to contribute to the family income dominated choices made.

By the time Sam had moved on from the secondary school to the local sixth form college he had become influenced by staff and students who saw university education as the next step. Encouraged by his English teachers he decided to apply for a university place.

“It was when I started my A-levels at the sixth form college, and they had been so encouraging and making sure that we worked hard with our A-levels to get the top grades to go to good universities...I would like to read English and probably at Leicester, Leeds, Sheffield, or Nottingham Trent.”

Influenced by his tutors Sam took on board the belief that a university place was possible, and his way to change the course of his job prospects. Sam had made it very clear that he was looking to find a career which gave the lifestyle he required, but not at the expense of extreme hard work he saw his father do. His parents, like Mark and Ashlee’s parents, placed a lot of trust upon the opinions of their child’s teachers; they saw them as professionals who had their son/daughters’ best interest in mind. With both his teachers’ and parents’ backing, Sam was able to make choices to study beyond the local universities and to think about the courses offered and the places he would like to be close to. Having been a supporter of Nottingham Forest football team as a boy, he was aware of the parts of the country he would be happy to move to, moving away from the family community but not so far that made travel impossible.

d) Concluding points

The family structure and background seen in Sam’s story was fairly typical of the students within this research and with the definition of working class used for this study. However, in this particular case study a few key influences and practices were well illustrated and showed a change in the flow of academic progression. Year 11 showed a ‘take-off’ point in his academic progress, having had a fairly average educational trajectory up to this point the tide turned and there was a determined drive to achieve and to move out of the local school, a decision which perhaps marked the point when Sam moved beyond and out of his family’s ‘habitus’ and into his own (Bourdieu, 1986). There were prominent role models in Sam’s story: his primary school teacher, who had a belief in Sam’s academic ability to succeed and provided a role model as a male primary school teacher, and two English teachers who rekindled this belief and provided practical support encouraging him to study English at university. Negative images also played a significant part in shaping Sam’s decisions. Sam’s awareness of his peers who had no qualifications and limited employment prospects and weekly ventured no further than the local pub, and his own father who although he respected

greatly, he had watched work extremely hard for what the family had gained. Sam was able to compare these images with that of his primary school teacher who he viewed as having a better quality of life which had been achieved via educational success.

The practices within the home as Sam grew up supported the research of Nash and Harker (2006), having had the availability of books, parents who read to Sam and who modelled reading to him, alongside well-structured time around a meal table when the family discussed family and current issues. His parents, although working long hours made time for shared family moments, trips and leisure activities, similar to those experiences spoken of in Yvonne's story.

Finally, Sam's story provides further insight into the struggle experienced by a working class child and their families when there is a gradual shift from the fundamental beliefs and practices held by the community to those dispositions and practices that are more in line with middle class (Consciousness catalyst, Kupfer 2015). The implementation of this change appeared to be supported for Sam by his peer group, some of whom moved in a similar direction to Sam, at least up until A-level. The final stage then came from an intrinsic competitive drive and the influence of school.

Sue's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	3,2c,2b
Key stage 2 results	5,4c,4a
Key stage 3 results	5c,5a,5b
Key stage 4 Results	1xB,7xC,1xD,1xF
Key stage 5 Results	B,B,D,U
University/Training	Aberystwyth
CATS Score Mean SAS	93
CATS Score Mean verbal	98
CATS Score Mean Quantative	94
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	88
Jesson Rating	above

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	CSE/RSA
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes
Influences on changed decision	School/friends
Homework	in school
attendance at school	91%
Career aspiration	not sure

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Manual
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.49
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+3
Position in siblings	2nd
Parental status	Not Married
local extended family	yes

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Encouragement
Relationship to staff	Strong Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Cousin
Parents read to them	Yes
student reads at home	yes
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	Yes in evenings
Holidays/ Days out	Yes days out

a) Structures

- Family Structure

There are five people in Sue's family, her Mother and Father and three children. Sue has two sisters, one older and one younger than her. Sue's grandmother lived within the family home since her grandfather died. Her extended family lived close by on the estate. They were a close knit family. Her mother and father had been together since leaving school but had never married.

- Family Background

Sue lived with her family on the older part of the estate, in a rented semi-detached social housing house, which had an IDACI index of 0.49; this was fairly high for the research group. The family was classed as hard pressed by acorn data. Sue's parents had manual jobs. Her father was the site manager of a local secondary school and her mother was a cleaner. They had been employed in these types of jobs since leaving school at the age of 16. Neither of her parents succeeded academically and both left school with few qualifications. Her parents had lived on the estate all their lives, and both were educated at the predecessor school to the research school.

- Educational progress

Sue's academic career did not show any outstanding features and she would be classed as an 'above average' student. Sue's achievements would not be noteworthy in most middle class schools but for the research school she was one of the top 40% who achieved the bench mark set by the government of gaining at least 5 A*-C grades at GCSE, by having gained 8 GCSEs at that grade. Sue went on to study, history, English, dance and RE at A level and then gained a place at Aberystwyth University to study European history. Throughout key stages 1 -3 her results were at or just below the national expectation, her English skills were slightly higher while her mathematic skills were slightly below the expected level. Sue failed her mathematics GCSE when she took it early in year 11 and eventually passed it in the main examination season in the summer. Sue's cognitive profile was predominately within the average boundaries between 90 and 100, only her non-verbal score was below the average national score. Her Jesson rating which was guided by her key stage 2 results placed her at above average with the expectation that she would achieve 5 A*-C Grades at the end of key stage 4.

b) Key practices influencing Sue's academic success

- Language Development

Sue was brought up in a household where academic success was not a shared experience. The parents were keen to provide well for the family and to ensure that happiness was gained. As a family they shared time together most days as they eat their evening meal. This practice of eating a meal together was a constant factor observed in the homes of the research students.

“Mum insists we eat together in the kitchen at the table and not up in our rooms. It is a good thing as we do get to talk together as a family. We talk about all different things, but especially what has happened in the family and what happened at school... I can talk with my parents after 9 O'clock when my grandmother has gone to bed. On Saturday all the family comes around to our house and we have supper together and chat. My uncles and aunts and my cousins. [I have] so many people to talk to so I have a great opportunity to speak with other adults as well as people of my own age.”

Daily family meal times and the closeness of the extended family had provided for Sue plenty of opportunity for language development with a variety of family members. The Language development of a child from an early age is vital to future academic success; a child with limited verbal skills reduces their secondary language skills of reading and writing (Nash, 2006). The practices of eating meals together and the regular socialization of the family had enabled Sue to have a head start with language development. Her higher results at key stage 1 and 2 in English may be due to this regular practice. Both these family practices were not provided by the family for the language development of their children but may have aided the educational outcome.

- Reading practices within the home

Sue was brought up in a household that did read, and she liked to read personally from an early age. The family was able to buy books. “*Yes we do have plenty of books in our house – probably about 200. We have horror books and all the Jodie Picoult books, and Jane Costello as me and my sister love to read these.*” The daughters were happy to use leisure time to read. Sue had a strong role model in her mum, who had read to her as a young child before bed, but had actively encouraged social reading. The majority of the families within the research had books within the home.

“Generally I have always read to myself, when I was very young they [Sue's parents] read me a bedtime story but very soon I liked to read to myself instead. I think my parents reading to me gave me the desire to read, and imagination and probably I knew

more about reading than some of my class mates when I started school...My mum still reads a great deal, I still see her reading every night. My dad does not really read he does not like reading. Most nights Dad will watch the television while mum reads, he watches the news and then whatever he likes.”

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Classed as a ‘Hard pressed’ family, Sue’s family had few surplus resources to provide wider experiences beyond the home for her as she grew up, limiting her world knowledge and interpersonal skills. This was not an uncommon condition for working class families on the estate unable to afford holidays and leisure activities. For Sue her family had never had a proper holiday. When Sue and her sisters were on school holidays her parents did take some time off work and spent days either at home or would go to the local beach with the extended family and spend a little money playing on the arcades or taking donkey rides. Her mother and father spent much of their leisure time at the local public house, and when Sue and her sister grew up they met up with their extended family here.

Language skills are also developed as a child gains wider world experiences and these are linked into their creative and imaginative expression which is particularly assessed in writing (Rees, 1968). The head teacher of the primary section of the research school encouraged staff to give the students new experiences, as this was reflected in their SATs writing papers. She gave the example of a child writing about a McDonald’s meal for a piece of creative writing which asked the child to describe a special celebration meal or banquet. If a child has only experienced routine events their fantasy world is restricted and they struggle to produce vivid imaginative written language work. Sue was able to compensate a little for her lack of wider encounters due to her rich reading experience.

c) Key dispositions influencing Sue’s academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Personal identity, motivation and achievement are argued to be linked (*Schick and Phillipson, 2009*); Sue used negative protagonists to motivate her. She linked her own identity with that given to her by her community, family members, and poor experiences.

“...my cousin, because he is always telling me that I can’t do things, not in a playful way, but really quite spiteful and this has made me work harder just to show him that I can and I am just as good, even better than him.”

She was able to identify the negative opinion her cousin had of her and how this had pushed her to achieve and to prove that he was incorrect. Sue was able to hold the self-belief that she

could change things and not necessarily follow the same educational path as others in her family and within her peer group. Sue recognised that her parents supported her, but was aware of their lack of academic success and that they promoted a message of doing what made her happy, and that to them happiness was all important. This did pose a problem for Sue as it was difficult to quantify this 'happiness'. What made her happy one day may not do so the next. Success in life and happiness to her were two elements in life and both were important to her.

"Mum and dad have always encouraged me to do what makes me happy. But I think what has really motivated me has been when I got a really bad grade I wanted to get a better one so worked harder."

Sue offset the search for happiness when she spoke of her thirst for educational achievement shown in high grades. Sue had a clear idea of the grades she wished to gain and was willing to continue to work hard in order to gain these grades. Whether Sue had intrinsic motivation to gain the higher grades or whether she continued to work hard to achieve high grades in order to please her teachers (Reay, 2009) was not known. Sue believed she had good relationships with her teachers but did not see this as the reason why she worked hard. Sue was driven to overcome the negative attitudes she held about herself. Being driven by negative experiences can be a high risk strategy. Too many negative experiences or taunts can cause the process to reverse and in order to protect herself Sue may have pretended that she no longer cared and could find her 'happiness' in something other than academic success. Jackson (2003) argued that this was more likely to have been the case for boys rather than girls, and that boys would be likely to even be motivated to sabotage others learning in class through disruptive behaviour; if they were not going to succeed neither would anyone else (Jackson, 2009). This was not the case for Sue who was well behaved and motivated by her friends who had a similar goal.

- Choice of school

Sue followed her parents and her elder sister by attending the local school. It was the nearest one and because the rest of the family had attended there they felt content to send their daughter as well, even though the data for the school at the time showed the school was struggling and the majority of the students left failing to gain the expected amount of GCSEs.

"My parents choose for me to come to this school as it was the nearest one and they had also been here. All my friends were going to this school as well. We did not attend the information evenings as we knew the school. My older sister was also attending it when I started so my parents knew everything they needed to know."

Following the norm set by the family was characteristic of the East London working class families described in the 1950s (Young and Willmott, 1952). The 'habitus' for Sue's family was that she went to the local school, creating the comfortable norm, even when that local school was graded by Ofsted as a 'failing school' and less than a third of the students achieved enough GCSEs to remain in education beyond key stage 4. Marshall (2012) argued that by sending one's daughter to the local school you increased the risk of underachievement, and perpetuated the downward spiral of deprivation of the local neighbourhood.

- Peer group

The desires and wants of Sue's family and the desires of her peer group created a paradoxical situation for her. Sue's close friends worked hard in school having a belief that their escape from the poverty cycle lay in educational success, they were 'getting out' (Brown, 1987). Sue lived by two life codes, that followed by her family and that taken on by her friends, assuming the habitus of the school.

"My friends share the same wants as I do; we all try to work hard at school. If I have any distractions it is because I create them not my friends. My friends really encourage me and if I don't wish to study they say, 'you don't want that grade' and this then motivates and inspires me to work harder."

Taking on the more traditional middle class views of the school system Sue worked hard with a firm belief that achieving in school, securing qualifications and moving on to university was what she wanted. This belief may have been a way for Sue of fitting in rather than consciously making a decision to move away from the family 'habitus'.

- School

Sue had attended the local nursery linked to the primary school which formed the 0-19 research school. The importance of schooling was not something that the family endorsed and Sue had grown up unaware of the benefits of education.

"I went to the local nursery a few times a week before I then joined reception class. I think it helped me to get to know a few people before I started school, but I don't know if it really helped as it was just playing a few mornings a week for about a year."

In year 9 Sue felt that the school supported her well and enjoyed dance and the residential activities camp she had attended in year 7. By the end of year 11 some of her views had changed and Sue had become aware that not all her peers, had been able to achieve. Although she had engaged with the academic programme offered by the school, not all students in her year group had been persuaded to engage. It was important that the messages

delivered by the teachers contained the belief that dreams fostered personally could become a reality. Sue had some friends who shared her aspirations and supported her to overcome the doubts held by other students, together with her personal determination to overcome the 'hard times' experienced by her family and neighbours. Sue had been shown an alternative way and was able to take on the belief and carry out the practices needed to fulfil this.

"I think the school needs to make sure that if students have dreams they really push them to make sure their dreams can happen. I think the school has done right for me but for others they need more help with this and the school needs to help them."

- Future career and higher education choices

As a working class child Sue was three times less likely than a middle class child to attend university (Jerrim, 2013). In year 9 Sue stated that she did not wish to attend university. By year 11 she had changed her mind and was keen to complete A-levels and go to university to study history. A good working relationship with her history teacher had encouraged interest in German history and fostered a belief that Sue could make a living linked to the academic world rather than finding a job locally.

"I am going to stay on and do A-levels and then go to university and do history, and then I want to travel to Germany or to Poland. I want to work in Poland or Germany in one of the concentration camps that is now a museum, and to become a curator. I know I will be away from my family but that does not scare me, it's just what I want to do."

By the time Sue was 16 years old the influence of her school, and especially her history teacher was strong enough to change her habitus, and Sue had begun a movement away from working class. For Sue however, like other children who are the first in their family to attend university the struggle to gain new cultural capital and to feel fully part of a new 'habitus' still had to be conquered. In year 12 Sue spoke of selecting local universities while her final selection was further afield as she had gained greater comfort in whom she was becoming. The importance of finding the right course, securing the correct grades and negotiating her way through the bureaucracy of the application system and funding for university had provided for her a new thirst for education.

"I want to go to a good university but Bath does not do the course I want so it will have to be Bristol or another one in the south west. I really love studying history and especially the German history part of the course. Going to university I know will be hard but it really motivates me to study and to do my best. My friends want to go to university as well but they all want to study dance and I want history. I know that the only way I can go and work in a place like Auschwitz is if I have a good history degree. At first they wanted to

go and I did not but when I saw how much I could get out of going I just decided to go...No one in my family has ever gone to university, my parents often say they wish they had done more, but I will be the first to attend university.”

While studying history and Religious studies in year 12 Sue met a survivor of the holocaust. An elderly gentlemen working with the Holocaust Educational Trust visited the school and spoke of his experiences in a German concentration camp. This was for Sue a life changing experience, a trigger point which caused the formulation of a new dream, and shaped her post school choices. Sue went to Aberystwyth University and read European history. This was a significant distance from her home and a difficult and long journey by public transport. This event was brought together by the culmination of a number of factors which triggered this critical change. Other students in the school may have experienced some of these events but the culmination was not strong enough or supported well enough to cause the ultimate change.

“My dream is to be able to live in Germany and have a nice family home, and a car. I will know that I have achieved my dream when I take people on a tour of the concentration camp and people are able to ask me questions and I will be able to answer them and tell them this type of thing will never happen again. Success to me is being happy with what you have got and knowing that you have done all you got to get it.”

Sue’s dream may be unrealistic but what it showed was how her past habitus still shaped her dream. The very foundation that the dream lay upon was that of establishing happiness and showing the role that you have in formulating that happiness. This view was maintained alongside a ‘get-out’ clause in case success was not achieved; a new happiness would be created out of the knowledge that you had worked as hard as you could.

Concluding points

The structural make-up of Sue’s family was characteristic of the definition for working class used in this study. Sue was from a family who had lived on the local estate for a number of generations, surrounded by both her father’s family and her mother’s family. Her parents both were employed in low paid manual jobs, had limited qualifications, and low mobility. Uncharacteristically, the family ate meals together regularly at the kitchen table and her mother is an avid daily reader. Although her parents encouraged Sue and wished the best for her like other parents, they were unable to turn their words into practical actions for her to do or follow to ensure she achieved this ‘happiness’.

Sue was highly driven and showed high motivation to achieve (Pedagogic effort catalysis, Kupfer 2015) although this motivation stemmed from negative influences. She reflected strongly the belief that ‘you work for what you receive’.

“I think I have done well at school because I have studied, I worked for it. I had a good relationship with my teachers but I think it was my efforts that made it all happen. I would say that the school and my friends have had the greatest influence upon me. Giving me a taste of history and a want to study it more and to tell others about what has happened in the past. My friends also have encouraged me a lot to believe that I can do this. My parents are always there and they want for me to be happy.”

Building on the foundations of the development of some sound literacy skills at home, Sue entered school with a slight advantage but was nurtured and supported by her friends and teachers especially in key stage 4. One significant event then shifted these merging factors leading to Sue selecting to study European history at university away from the family home. Sue was driven by the passion to study a particular period in history, an introduction to this period of history had changed her perspective on the world and the aims for her life. Sue's story illustrates the change catalysis of 'seeking truth in higher education' (Kupfer, 2015) where a desire to study provides a new security to life as her world view changed with new academic study.

Tony's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2c,2b,2a
Key stage 2 results	4c,3b,4c
Key stage 3 results	4c,4a,4b
Key stage 4 Results	10xC, 2x F
Key stage 5 Results	merit, merit
University/Training	Looking for work
CATS Score Mean SAS	79
CATS Score Mean verbal	80
CATS Score Mean Quantative	77
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	81
Jesson Rating	average

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	CSE/RSA
Choice of School	sister at school
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	no
Influences on changed decision	
Homework	Limited amount of work given to complete.
attendance at school	94%
Career aspiration	Engineer

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Manual
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.54
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	2nd
Parental status	Re-married
local extended family	yes

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	little support
Relationship to staff	medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	no
Parents read to them	yes
student reads at home	no
Books within the home	no
Eat as a family	yes
Holidays/ Days out	yes

a) Structures

- Family Structure

There were four people in Tony's family, his Mother and Father and two children. Tony was the younger child and he had an older sister. The family lived in the lower part of the estate, which is locally known as 'The Valley'. The area had one of the higher IDACI ratings of 0.54, although not the most deprived in this research area. The family had lived on the estate all their lives and rented a semi-detached house from the local housing association. The family was classed by the acorn economic groupings as 'Hard pressed'. Tony had a large number of his extended family who lived on the estate.

- Family Background

Tony's mother re-married when Tony was quite young, and he has viewed his step-father as his father, having had only the occasional contact with his birth father. His mother and step father both worked locally, as did his own father. His step father worked for 16 years on the factory floor of the local car manufacturer, but when made redundant moved to another large local employer and worked as a rail maintenance worker. Tony's mother worked at a local warehouse since leaving school and worked through the company to become one of the warehouse managers. Both parents carried out manual tasks and worked long hours.

Tony's parents were educated locally; his mother attended the predecessor school to the research school on the estate, while his step father attended the other local secondary school on the south side of the town which served another large social housing estate. Both his parents and his step father finished school at the age of 16 with few qualifications. Although seeing the importance of education and gaining qualifications they had not gone on to gain further qualifications as these were never required in their field of work and they were content with the jobs they had so did not look to move on.

- Educational progress

Tony's academic profile was the second lowest of the students in the research group. At key stage 1 he was below the expected level for English, at the expected level for mathematics and above the expected level in science. At the end of key stage 2 he had achieved the expected progress of two full levels in English, but in mathematics and science his progress was below the expected rate achieving only one full level in mathematics and one full and two sub-levels in science. However, his progress throughout key stage 3 became characteristic of other working class students with stagnant progress in English, completing the year a full level below the national expectation for 14 year olds.

The prediction (Jesson rating) for Tony's key stage 4 qualifications was graded 'average' against his key stage 2 results with a 7% probability of him achieving 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics. Tony's CAT scores also placed him below average, all scores below 90. Progress for Tony in years 10 and 11 were quite dramatic with him achieving 10 grade C grades and then moving into the sixth form to achieve a diploma in engineering with double merit credit, the equivalent of 160 UCAS points.

b) Key practices influencing Tony's academic success

- Language Development

A shared passion in mechanical engineering was shared between Tony and his stepfather. Tony enjoyed having the opportunity to hear about his stepfather's work day experiences as the family ate together. Being able to discuss key family matters as well as the events of the day had been central to family meal times which generally were taken together at the family table. From an early age Tony had the opportunity to develop his conversational skills and widen his knowledge about his family, as weekly the family gathered and spent time together. Tony developed a relaxed approach to socializing with his peers and adults. Having had the support of a close family the role of the school had not played such an important role and Tony had only spoken to his teachers about work related matters.

- Reading practices within the home

Although conversation times were in ample supply for Tony there was not the same emphasis on reading. Tony estimated that his family had at least 100 books in the house on a variety of topics, but both his parents did not read regularly, although they both had electronic tablets which they used occasionally to read the newspaper or other articles. As a child he tended to read his school reading scheme books while in primary but did not develop a love of reading for pleasure. *"I would read when I brought my reading books home from school like four times a week, I think this really helped me to start reading."* Tony's progress in English reflected his lower level of engagement with reading outside of school; starting below average at 2c in key stage 1 and then progressing to level 4c at the end of year 6 which then stagnated throughout key stage 3. Tony entered key stage 4 with a reading age of 11.01 at the start of year 7 which increased only slightly to 12 by the time he was 14 years old. Tony was fully functioning as an adult reader but would have found wider exploration of literacy more difficult.

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Although having an interest in travel, Tony and his family went on holiday for relaxation and sunshine. The family saw time away from work as critical and would save up for the once a year summer holiday.

“We have had loads, we went to Florida once to the theme parks and we have done a few leisure parks in this country as well as we were growing up. Nowadays we tend to go to the beach and have a time to relax, I like both. We went on holiday generally once a year in the summer. We have tended to go aboard to get the sunshine, and then just visit family who live in Bournemouth, and we see them more frequently not just at holiday times.”

As his extended family had grown up and with the changing economic climate one element of the family had moved away. Although far from the estate contact had been maintained and this created a wider experience of the country for Tony as they made reasonably frequent visits to see that section of their family.

c) Key dispositions influencing Tony’s academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

There were many aspects of Tony’s life which were characteristic of the working class, structurally and in the family practices. Tony’s aspirations were highly characteristic of the working class, viewing success in terms of having enough money to enjoy the basics in life, being in employment, and having close family nearby. His influential role models had been his parents and he had measured his own success against theirs.

“I would not say that one person has particularly influenced me as has both of my parents are successful so I think they both have influenced me. They both have motivated me but probably my dad has more so, because of his engineering work and I would like to do that to, so he has encouraged me a little more in this area.”

- Choice of school

Like many families on the estate Tony’s mother had attended the estate school and his parents had sent him and his sister along to their nearest school. His sister had achieved some A-levels at the school before going into local employment. Tony’s aspirations and plans for his life followed a similar pattern. Selection of the local school was a given and the desire to achieve qualifications in order to secure employment in a job with some prospects which he enjoyed was his desire. Selection of his secondary school had been more automatic rather than an active individual selection for Tony and his parents.

“My older sister had done quite well here getting her A levels so I followed her. We had a lot of information about the school because my sister was here so we knew it well; the school sent us information out as well.”

With his sister having completed her education at the school and meeting the basic requirements of the family's wants from the education system his parents saw no need to send Tony to a different school.

- Peer group

As with other young men in this group Tony was also attracted to a 'laddish culture'; a culture which promoted strong masculinity and shied away from the academic world where failure might be possible. Tony found himself in 'a duality of being' (Reay 2006) where he was keen to be fully immersed in his peer group culture but at the same time working towards some qualifications.

“There were those who worked and those who did not, but I could work alongside both. We were just friends I don't think they had a great impact on me ... I have two different groups of friends one group who say do you want to come round to study and the other group who say let's go out, muck about and have fun. I was able to say no to one group if I knew that I had to get the work done I would just not go with the other group and just finish the work either on my own or with my other friends.”

Supporting this duality will have placed pressure on Tony's ability to focus on academic achievement. Tony achieved above the national bench mark, and higher than those fully part of the local 'laddish' culture. However, Tony had not achieved at the same rate as others in the cohort who did not find themselves supporting the same duality. His home location within one of the most impoverish areas of the estate, and an area with a poor reputation, known for high crime rates and unsociable behaviour, may have added to the need for Tony to feel part of the 'laddish' culture, while still trying to balance a desire to embrace middle class values and become an engineer.

- School

“I have done well at School because of the teachers, they have helped me a lot, I was well motivated by them, they showed me what might happen if I did not work, I would be like all my friends who failed to achieve anything and I really did not wish to be like that...I don't know really [if there has been anything in particular] it always seem to have been the same since year 7 to now. I think I put a lot more effort into my work than a lot

in our year did, there were others who worked hard and I suppose I followed them a little. I know I worked hard for my GCSEs.”

Tony acknowledged the strength of influence that his teachers had upon him as he progressed through the school. Working as a counterbalance to the ‘laddish’ local culture Tony was surrounded by the school teachers who spoke of the consequences of not engaging with education and failing to achieve any qualifications. Tony responded to the wishes of his teachers by working hard and making sure he stayed the right side of the boundary line of academic achievement but not straying too far away from the ‘lads’. Survival in both camps was achieved when the participant showed that not too much had been invested in terms of time and the desire to do well; creating a persona that was more care-free about whether or not school work was completed to a high standard. The reality may well be that many private hours had been invested but this was not portrayed. After the event when Tony had secured what he required he was then able to admit that it took hard work and that failure was always a possibility.

Tony was selected to be part of a group of students who took the new diploma in Engineering. These diplomas were a group of GCSEs which built a package that was particularly suited to a more vocational pathway while still having an academic credence. The diploma was not viewed as successful by the government and was disbanded a few years after Tony took his. For Tony however, it provided for him a valuable link to local engineers who supported the school with this course.

“I have liked being part of the engineering course and was particularly keen when I was selected to work with the engineers from Honda. We constructed a large clock made from car parts which is now in the front reception area.”

Although seeing that his teachers had supported him well throughout his GCSEs, Tony was more critical of the pathways offered for students who did not wish to follow a purely academic route and progress on to university. Due to the size of school based sixth forms, it is more difficult for smaller providers to offer a wide range of courses both academic and vocational; secondary schools traditionally offer the academic routes leaving the further educational providers to offer the vocational courses. Moving away from the secondary school at a post 16 level was for some students at the research school outside of their comfort zone. Tony’s sister had achieved well at the school post 16 and since his parents had no personal experience of post 16 educators, they did not see a move to another institution some distance from the home as an option.

- Future career and higher education choices

Tony, unlike the other students in this survey, never considered attending university. In year 9 and 11 he was very sure that he would not apply for university and instead he aimed to gain a local apprenticeship and become an engineer. Tony's father and step father had both worked in the local car manufacturing industry, becoming an engineer was following in a similar line to them. Young and Wilmott (1952) found a similar situation to be characteristic of working class families, the senior family members learnt the local trades and their younger family members came and worked alongside them. Having a 'known' trade created a comfortable habitus for the family members but it has been argued that this pattern maintains the family within their socio-economic group and perpetuates the social deprivation. Within the changed economic landscape a child no longer had the opportunity to be sure of employment alongside their parent, or even in a similar line. The rise in tertiary employment and decline in manufacturing across the United Kingdom had made following in a family trade less likely. The impact of Tony's elder sister not attending university also influenced his decision. His sister took a 'gap' year influenced by other students, then decided not to return to education. She believed she was able to achieve a standard of living similar to that experienced by the family without further qualifications and saw no need to change this, reinforcing for Tony the desire to seek employment rather than further education.

"I want to go and get an engineering apprenticeship or perhaps if not I might go to University. If I went to University I have not thought where but it would be to study engineering. My sister talked about going but she took a year out and then did not wish to go. I am not sure if she regrets that but I did not wish to make the wrong decisions."

Tony's desire to remain within his known habitus differs to others in this research. Many of the other students voiced that they wished to move away from the estate, attend university and create for themselves a world that escaped some of the pressures of their existing life.

"When I am earning I will want to still live here as I have lived here all my life, my family is here and there is nothing wrong with it. However, I do think it would also be nice to live aboard for a couple of years. I might like to go to America as I liked it when I went there."

Similar to Sam, Tony spoke of the importance of being happy, and how this shaped the decisions he made and how he viewed aspects of his life. The dominance of 'happiness' in an unquantifiable manner appeared to be a protective shield against the inevitable disappointments that might occur as he failed to gain an apprenticeship or to become an

engineer. Setting himself a wide ten year margin and a caveat that if his dream plan changed as long as he was happy he would still class this as a success.

“My goal is to be an engineer, but it all depends where I am really by then. It will not matter if I am still in an apprenticeship if I have achieved that, but my dream is to be an engineer. It will not matter to me if it takes five or ten years. I will still be happy with my life even if my dream changes, as long as I have work and can provide for my family and I am happy that would be my success. It will be success but not the fullest of it. I would be very successful if I have the top job and earning a lot of money.”

d) Concluding points

Becky, Louise and Tony are the three within the research group who did not apply or wish to attend university. Becky and Louise both had considered it but due to pressures of family life and personal decisions did not attend. Tony in contrast was sure throughout his education that at 18 years of age he would enter the world of work. Tony did feel that it was the school environment and not his home life that had motivated him to succeed to a level above that of at least 60% of his year group. His progress from key stage 1 was rather dramatic and throughout the majority of his educational career his academic achievement was below average and especially by the age of 14 his grades had stagnated. Engaging in the engineering course turned his below average progress into final grades that were well above those achieved by more than half of the country's school leavers, and for students with Tony's level of disadvantage he entered into a more select 'success group'. Had the school been able to engage with Tony at an earlier age and work to promote different dispositions to those held by the local community Tony's progress and mobility and 'capital' may have increased.

“Well both [home and school] but probably the school has had a bigger impact. When I am in an educational place I am like motivated to do work, it is my study place. When I am at home I suppose I am still learning but not as much.”

Tony's story illustrates well the dilemma created for schools working in challenging circumstances. The leadership and staff working at the school embody middle class views where education, career aspirations and a strong assimilation into the capitalist world dominate. The wider family although important does not share the same physical space within the middle class world. By promoting these dispositions the school actively diminishes the importance of key aspects of the working class capital and promotes the message that success can be achieved when one escapes the spiral of deprivation. This course of action although carried out with good intentions calls into question the validity of any culture apart from that of the dominant class.

Scott's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	2b,2c,2a
Key stage 2 results	4c,4b,4b
Key stage 3 results	5c,4b,5b
Key stage 4 Results	2xB, 4xC, 2xD, 2xE
Key stage 5 Results	merit, merit, merit, merit
University/Training	Gloucestershire
CATS Score Mean SAS	83
CATS Score Mean verbal	78
CATS Score Mean Quantative	86
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	85
Jesson Rating	above

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	GCE/CSE
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	yes
Influences on changed decision	PE Teacher
Homework	Limited amount of work given to complete.
attendance at school	91%
Career aspiration	Sports management

Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.54
Free School Meals	No
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	2nd
Parental status	married
local extended family	yes

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	wider support
Relationship to staff	little Influence
Relationship to Peers	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Football coach
Parents read to them	yes
student reads at home	no
Books within the home	yes
Eat as a family	weekends
Holidays/ Days out	yes

a. Structures

- Family Structure

There were four people in Scott's family, his Mother and Father and two children. Scott had an older sister. They lived in the central area of the estate, in a rented semi-detached local housing association house with one of the lower IDACI indexes for the estate (0.54). The family had a long relationship with the estate and had some immediate family living locally. Scott's parents grew up within the town, on the southern side of the town, on a similar but slightly smaller local housing estate. His parents were educated within the town. His parents moved onto the estate after they were married, as a house became available on this estate rather than the estate they had been born on. Wishing to have a house of their own, they moved across the town to this estate and have remained there ever since.

Scott's father is a council worker, within the parks and estates department, carrying out manual duties. His father has worked for the council for a significant amount of time; previously he was a driver for a local delivery company. Scott's mother after remaining at home to care for the two children returned to work as a teaching assistant at the local primary school. She trained while working as a teaching assistant and then worked as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA). The family was classed as 'Hard pressed' within the Acorn categories.

- Family Background

Both Scott's parents left school with few examinations, although both attempted to improve their working opportunities by taking further work based qualifications over the years. Their attitude towards education changed as their children grew up and as their need to provide for their children changed. The only way to increase their ability to earn more money was to take further qualifications.

"They both left school at 16, with a few examinations, mum has done her BTEC examination for TAs while she has worked at the school and dad has passed various work based qualifications over the years. Both of my parents did not really like being at school and did not gain a great deal of examinations."

The capacity to earn more remained limited but by gaining a few more qualifications, his mother was able to improve her employment opportunities and work in a slightly higher paid role as a HLTA within the school and his father as a ground crew leader. Being trapped within this economic cycle due to the lack of secondary educational success, they tried to encourage their children to gain qualifications so they may have more career choices available to them.

Scott's sister enjoyed secondary school and was inspired by her mother to become a primary school teacher. She took three A-levels and gained a place at the University of Gloucestershire on a primary education course two years before Scott completed his post 16 education.

- Educational progress

Scott was described in school reports as a 'bright boy' but one who failed to engage fully with his studies. His results at key stage 1 -3 show him to have a profile of an average student and CAT scores which show he was slightly below average. At the end of key stage 2, he was in line with national expectations in science and mathematics and a sub-level below for English. While his grades in English and science increased over key stage 3 and were in line with national expectation his mathematics stagnated; he did manage to secure a C grade at GCSE. Scott only just finished above the benchmark expectation nationally for his year gaining 6 A*-C grades. He however, used these qualifications to study for an extended BTEC diploma and secured a place on a degree course at the University of Gloucestershire to read sports management.

a) Key practices influencing Scott's academic success

- Language Development

Family time was quite limited for Scott; the family did not eat together regularly. The impact of the limited time spent together, restricted time available for Scott to develop his language skills through routine conversations with his family. Scott's English language skills remained below average throughout the majority of his secondary education, only securing the C grade at GCSE through hard work motivated by the requirement to have GCSE English and mathematics at grade C in order to take up a place on the Football 'Futsal' scholarship course.

"I generally go out of an evening, we do eat together on a Sunday, mum makes sure we have a big lunch that day and we eat together. [I talk] a bit, mum and my sister do, but Dad and I don't as much. I can speak to mum if I need to but me and me mates discuss things a lot."

Generally for Scott discussing everyday issues was not part of his routines and not viewed by him as a very male thing to do, he saw his mother and sister chatting about every day events but if he wished to chat to anyone it was with his peers, in a male dominated environment.

- Reading practices within the home

Scott's reading habits were fostered well as a young boy by his mother as she read stories to him at bedtime. This regular practice did not lead to Scott having a passion for independent reading. He and his father shared a love of football and reading the weekly football magazine between them was the extent of his father's and Scott's reading commitment. The family had books within the home but these were generally used by his mother and sister as they related to their work and university course.

"We have books at home, I don't have many but mum does, we have about 100. Mum has children's books for her work and some of them were ours from when me and my sister were growing up. Mum read stories to us when we were little. Dad worked shifts so was not home all the same times. Dad and I look at football magazines. My sister reads when she comes home from university."

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Scott's family divided their leisure time by gender with Scott and his father spending time together either watching their local football team at the local grounds or travelling with the club to away matches. Scott played for a team mid-week and in a Sunday league. His father took him to training and went to watch him play matches. His mother and sister spent time together. During school holidays the family would take regular days out to the beach. Scott's life was heavily centred on football; the scholarship programme took full advantage of his passion and was able to re-energize him and to show him the relevance and necessity of gaining qualifications in order to pursue football as a career. A regular curriculum would not have achieved this level of re-engagement and would not have led to Scott entering university.

b) Key dispositions influencing Scott's academic success

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Some opportunities act as trigger moments which create life-changing situations. During Year 9 Scott experienced a life-changing moment and he was able to consolidate this incident into a series of events, which resulted in a level of academic success and a place at university. Students from deprived backgrounds are ten times less likely to go to university than students from wealthier backgrounds (Perrucci & Wysong, 2006). Starting a Futsal scholarship programme was the mechanism that created the shift for Scott. The course also provided for him a clear role model in the course coach who was able to sustain the life-changing effects the course offered. The success rate of the course of only 75% showed that it was not the solution for all.

“My coach at Futsal has been important as he has believed that I could pass the course in year 11 and he worked hard to make sure I finished school and was able to go on. I have also been asked to go on the tournaments and help out regularly. I won the ‘Student of the Year’ prize and this made mum and dad really proud and I think my coach voted for me to get it.”

The football coach showed a belief in Scott and encouraged him to work hard in all aspects of his studies supporting the school’s intention to provide football skills and a firm core education for each of the course members. Scott’s mother and father added to the strong role model of his coach, by showing how proud they were of him throughout the course and regularly offering their support by attending matches, Futsal and school family events.

- Choice of school

When Scott’s parents selected his secondary school it was not related to the possibilities of the school offering football courses as this course at this time had not been created. His parents selected for Scott to attend the local secondary school as it was the school already attended by his sister, the local school, his friends were all attending and it was the catchment area school for Scott’s primary school. *“My sister already attended the school and all my mates where going to go there. It was near to our home and any other would have been difficult to get to.”*

- Peer group

By the time Scott and his peers were in year 9 at secondary school he already had a number of fixed term exclusions, as did many of his friendship group. Scott’s friends had a strong reputation for their ‘laddish’ behaviour, and were known by the local police force. The group were skilled sportsmen. By enabling this group to play football while also completing their GCSEs, the school had found a way to motivate the group to achieve academically. The sports course gave their academic studies a purpose and one that linked well with their ‘laddish’ culture.

“We all were selected to go on the course and this really helped as we could work together, I know they also are mad at times and we have not always made it easy for ourselves in school, but since the scholarship things have changed and we are all off to university or have places with football teams to go to.”

It was not only Scott who reaped the benefits of this programme; the friendship group that Scott was part of worked positively together, with a highly competitive nature which the programme was able to enhance and also use as a tool of motivation. The programme

provided for the boys a focus, and it was the group support, guided by their coach, that enabled them to achieve on the football pitch and academically.

- School

Scott attended his local nursery and primary school before transferring to the local secondary school. *“I went to the nursery attached to the primary school a few mornings every week.”*

While Scott was in year 9 he was selected for a Futsal scholarship course that the school was piloting with a national company. This course was run over a number of days each week. The students attended ‘school’ at the football arena on these days working on football skills. Scott then returned to school for the remainder of the week to complete his core subjects. This foundation scholarship led into an elite scholarship on a national programme which allowed students to take the extended BTEC qualification in sport studies (performance and excellence) award. In order to be selected for this higher level course the scholar must complete the foundation course successfully and gain a C grade in English, mathematics and science. Driven by a desire to play football and the chance of being selected to be part of this elite course, Scott re-engaged with school and managed to pass his examinations and gain a place on the elite scholarship course.

“I have done well since I was selected to go on the Futsal scholarship course in year 9 and then in year 12, as part of the elite group. I had to pass my GCSEs in order to be selected as part of the elite programme and I really wanted to play football and be on this course...When I was in year 9, I was nearly expelled and the school said I could go on the course as long as I worked hard and if I did not I would be kicked off. The course was good, and they really did kick people off the course if you did not work hard in school, only eight who started the course out of the 12 finished it after three years because they kicked them off or they were expelled from school.

The Futsal course changed the course of educational progress for Scott. By the time he was in year 9 he had a string of fixed term exclusions and a reputation along with a number of other ‘lads’ in the year group. The course was a last resort for this group of boys. In year 9 there were 12 boys selected for this pilot course funded via a school improvement grant and designed especially for boys who had disengaged from school. The ideology of such a programme was to offer the ‘lads’ an alternative curriculum and provide them with a way back into education and onto further education, both post 16 and post 18 courses. Although the transition was at first hard, the incentive to be able to play football and to be trained by world class players was enough to keep Scott engaged and ensure that he completed his school work alongside his sports studies. Only 8 of the original twelve boys completed the course,

those who did not were withdrawn from the programme due to failure to comply with the basic school requirements and to stay out of trouble. For those who did, six of the eight were then selected to continue on to the elite scholarship programme. The boys would have liked to have completed their full secondary education time on the programme, however, maintaining an element of school based learning made the transition into further education and then higher education easier.

“They should have let us go to Futsal all the week and to do our English and mathematics GCSE there not having to come back to school.”

- Future career and higher education choices

“In year 11 I hope that I am selected for one of the Futsal scholarship places as our school has some special ones since we are the host school. I hope that my mates get on the course as well. After that they [the course leaders] talk of getting us selected to be part of the football teams in the under 21s or to go on a coaching course at university. I don’t mind which I do I just know I want to play football as a career.”

At the age of 14 Scott had no belief that he would ever go to university. His sister who was two years older than him also followed a similar pattern as Scott with no aspiration at 14 to go to university; it was not within the dreams of their family. Scott’s sister at the age of 17 was inspired by the school to think about university in order to become a primary school teacher. Having his sister make the first step created a smoother route for Scott to embrace the full vision of the Futsal scholarship programme and apply for university. He followed his sister and applied to the same local university along with two of his friends.

“My sister has just gone to the local university, she lives at home and drives in, but if I went to do the coaching course I would live away as it is on the other campus in the city. The course is good and we went with the school to have a look at the campus. The scholarship programme will help to get me in as well. My sister was the first of our family, and friends to go to university. Her friends went with her. She really likes it. But if I want to do coaching in football you need it. The scholarship is designed to make us either join a team or go on to university, they help us to move on to either of these.”

Scott’s wish for his future was to play football professionally for a team in at least the championship league. Alternatively he would like to find a career coaching a professional team. Scott had a clear vision for his future and knew the course provided him with important networks, these could aid the development of his career and provide the type of life he wanted.

“I would live the life that goes with that [professional football success] and have a house and car to match. I don’t want to live around here, although the local team is a good place to start.”

c) Concluding points

Unlike the majority of students in this study, Scott’s academic profile and school history were not typical of a student who had the possibility to achieve above the national expectation and enter university. With a history of poor behaviour, having embraced the ‘laddish’ culture which has typified working class boys previously (Covington, 1992, 1998 and Jackson, 2009), Scott was on a trajectory similar to his parents: limited qualifications, a manual job, and low social mobility. Although this may have brought a degree of happiness, the scholarship programme provided a greater number of options and Scott was able to select a different route to that experienced by his parents. “...*the scholarship which school set up has changed things for me, I would not be doing this well if I had not been on the course.*” Scott’s story illustrates a mixture of two change catalysts, ‘pedagogic effort and seeking truth in higher education’. Scott had achieved success through the scholarship programme and with the pathway open to attend university and study sports coaching and management, new life opportunities were opening for him and his future life.

Luke's story

Academic History	
Key stage 1 results	B,B,N
Key stage 2 results	B, 3.2, 3.4
Key stage 3 results	4c,4c,4c
Key stage 4 Results	1 x D, 6 x F(2x C resit Maths/English)
Key stage 5 Results	Pass, Pass
University/Training	Leeds (Foundation Degree)
CATS Score Mean SAS	81
CATS Score Mean verbal	81
CATS Score Mean Quantative	86
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	78
Jesson Rating	Below
Socio-economic status	
Mother's occupation	Semi-skilled /retraining
Father's occupation	
Acorn Economic Group	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.54
Free School Meals	Yes
House Type	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented
Family Size	2+2
Position in siblings	1
Parental status	With partner
local extended family	yes

Educational Influences / Dispositions	
Parental Education	No qualifications
Choice of School	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	yes
Influences on changed decision	Music Teacher
Homework	not often have any
attendance at school	95%
Career aspiration	Technological staging and sound.

Family Practices	
Actions of Parents	Helped with reading
Relationship to staff	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	Strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Music Teacher /SENCo
Parents read to them	yes
student reads at home	no
Books within the home	no
Eat as a family	yes
Holidays/ Days out	yes

a) Structures

- Family Structure

Luke was born to a single teenage mother, who by the time Luke was born wished to have no contact with Luke's natural father. After having to leave school, Luke's mother left home and gave birth to him in sheltered teenage housing. Luke's early years were spent living in a bedsit with a low level of interaction with other children.

"I had the eldest when I was just seventeen I was really quite young. I lived in a homeless hostel. The guy I was with was really no good so I just decided I was going to do this on my own. I met Steve when Luke was about eighteen months old, it was not really difficult at that time as I thought this is my child and I am going to do it right." (Luke's mother)

Within Luke's household there was his mother, his half-brother and his mother's long term partner. Luke's mother grew up on the estate and his grandmother and grandfather although divorced both lived locally. Steve (Luke's mother's partner) grew up in London and his parents moved on to the estate when he was 15.

Luke and his family lived on the main road which divided the two parts of the estate. The family was classed as hard pressed by the Acorn categories and their house had an IDACI index of 0.54, on the lower scale of the research group.

Family Background

Luke's mother left school with few qualifications, but later had restarted her studies and had worked toward GCSEs and took an access course to higher education. She had a number of different jobs linked to administration and moved to become a Teaching Assistant when Luke started secondary school, then to work in the data administration team within the school. Steve left school after completing A-levels and worked for the local council in the transport department.

Luke's mother described the attitude that her partner's family and her own family had, and how different they were. The lack of interest in education from her own mother had been the motivation which had driven her forward. She was determined not to repeat the failings she saw in her own childhood.

"For Steve, his education was really pushed when he was young. He lived in London and moved here when he was 15. His family ran the local taxi company. In my family you were encouraged more not to go to school so that the eldest could look after the younger children. My parents were separated and although education was important to my dad he could not really do anything. We lived with my mum and she had told the

school that he did not have custody of us so the school would never speak to him or send him our reports. This only came to light recently when I asked him why he had not made us go to school and he said that he had been made to sign this over to mum.”
(Luke’s mother)

Luke reflected a similar view to his mother, acknowledging the sacrifices his mother had made for him so that he had better chances in life than she had had.

“No, education was not so important to me, not really while I was growing up. Things were really hard for mum and she brought me up on her own, I know she wanted to do things really different to how she was brought up. My granddad was quite supportive of mum and I and then when mum met Steve she got more support.”

- Educational progress

Luke’s academic profile differs from the rest of the cohort group. He was selected due to his rapid progress with his reading in year 8 when Luke achieved 54 months progress in eight months. This rate of progress differed greatly from others in the year group and marked him out for special interest.

Having had a difficult start to life, being brought up by a single teenage parent Luke started nursery school at the age of 2 ½ years old and then showed very slow progress with his reading in particular. He was graded B, B, N at the end of key stage 1, signalling that he was well below the expected level in English and mathematics, and just missing the expected level in science.

“My son did not do the SATs and got B because of his reading. I knew he knew things but learning things was difficult for him, although the school did try to help him out nothing seemed to change until he went to the secondary school.” (Luke’s mother)

Luke’s mother held a strong belief that her son had ability and could make it academically; his determination made sure that he did not slide through school failing but that things were addressed and changes made. He continued to struggle throughout primary and was not asked to sit the SATs at the end of key stage 2, resulting in teacher assessed grades of B, 3.2 and 3.4. His English grade still below the grade of the national curriculum tests and his mathematics and science grades a full level below national expectation for 11 year olds.

Although improving greatly with his reading in year 8, his examination grades did not show the strength of improvement and he achieved three 4c grades at the end of key stage 3 and one grade D and six grade Fs at the end of year 11. The school allowed Luke to stay on and to take a diploma in Performing Arts, to re-sit his English and mathematics and to study AS level

Fine Art. He achieved a grade C in the Fine Art, and a grade C for both his GCSEs. Luke continued with the BTEC diploma in year 13 and passed with two pass grades.

b) Key practices influencing Luke's academic success

- Language Development

Having had limited contact with adults and other children for the first eighteen months of Luke's life, when his mother met Steve life made a dramatic shift and he became part of a family; his step-brother born when he was three years old. His mother stayed at home while Luke and his brother were young and Steve worked locally. The family did not tend to eat together regularly as Steve worked long hours. At weekends the family would eat together and where possible spend time together. Although time was sometimes limited, conversations were a rich part of the family life.

"Oh we are always talking especially about things on the news, Steve is good for a great debate on a current issue, and we all join in. But if I want to speak to mum about things I just can."

Luke spoke with great relish of the special time the family spends in debating current issues, his mother reflected that this was a male-dominated domain. "*The three males do still have long conversations I tend not to join in now with them.*"

- Reading practices within the home

Changes in Luke's life were again illustrated, when he spoke of the reading resources that were available to him.

"We all have bookcases in our bedrooms filled with books. I did not have so many when I was growing up with mum but once we were a family and there was more money we had lots of books. We always went to the library mum and me, when I was young."

Having access to a local library meant that Luke was still able to access reading books from a young age, even though the family did not have surplus resources to buy books. Luke had been read to throughout his childhood at bed time and then with his school reading books. He came to realize at an early age that he did not find reading easy and this meant he became disinterested in reading. Although Steve read plenty of books for pleasure, he had not frequently seen his mother reading, and felt that she read when she needed to study rather than for pleasure.

"When I went to school mum read with me but I found it really difficult and did not want to read them myself, I did like to look at the pictures or listening to stories."

His mother was aware that she was not a strong role model as a reader for her son, but she held an unwavering belief that her son should be provided with better opportunities than she had.

“[As a child] we had a few books but not on the scale that we have now. People would buy us books at Christmas. My great grandma used to buy me the Enid Blyton books. From my childhood I am not a great reader, I would like to be, all I do now is my study reading. Steve is completely book mad. He will read a book a week, but he grew up with books where as I did not. I really think I thought it was important to make sure that the boys had books because I did not.”

(Luke’s mother)

- Wider family experiences and holidays

Family time was important for Luke’s mother and partner. Unfortunately, work commitments and limited spending power had reduced the opportunities to take long holidays. Instead the family had taken regular days out. They enjoyed visits to the swimming pool, cinema, bowling alley and eating out.

Luke became very involved with the Performing Arts department, taking an interest in sound technology, and playing the guitar. Guitar playing was encouraged by his mother and Luke set up a band with his school mates. This new venture gave the students a focus and they were motivated to engage more with school and to remain into the sixth form to develop their skills and to use the recording facilities the music department had.

c) **Key dispositions influencing Luke’s academic success**

- Role models and the influence of significant people

Luke identified a few people who he felt had had an impact upon his life, two school teachers and his mother. The relationship that Luke had with his mother was special, having spent a great deal of time together as they both grew up, his mother as a teenage to an adult and he as a child of a single parent to becoming immersed fully into a family.

“There has been [plenty of encouragement] in the upper school especially with a few teachers in drama and in music, and with the SENCo. The music department have all been really good and encouraged me and my friends to explore our music and to think about a career in music and theatre. Mum has of course, as she was central to my life at first. But they both have a really good work ethic which I think has rubbed off as I know you have to work hard for what you get. I can see that as mum has worked so hard, and she is so different to her mum’s family who just don’t work.

Luke stressed the importance the motivation provided by his teachers gave to him, engaging him with school after having lost some focus in the lower school. Once Luke had learnt to read he was able to access the curriculum more easily, this opened to him a whole new realm of interests and a belief that he could do something and succeed.

The impact his mother had upon him was to show him a different way to live. Working hard to make opportunities for oneself which improved the quality of your life was not a typical working class value. Luke's mother worked hard to move away from the hardship of her own past, with strong determination not to allow her own children to have the poor start in life she experienced. Luke was untypically provided with messages which were countercultural. Whether or not his mother was aware of what she was providing for Luke in her 'change attitude' this greatly shaped his thoughts on life and how he would shape his. Luke was aware how this differed from the views and experiences of his friends.

"My partner and I were studying and we made the decision that we would not tell the boys what they had to do. Some parents do tell their children that they need to pay their way or that they must go to university and the children go and do the opposite just because they wish to have the choice. I just want the boys to make the choices and it is to be completely up to them. But we probably were sending messages to them without knowing."

(Luke's mother)

- Choice of school

"I came to this school because it was local and we could get here easily. Mum had attended here so knew what it was like, I wanted to come because my friends were all coming we did look at the others but mum knew I wanted to come here so was happy to give it a go."

The decision to attend the local school, to attend with his friends and to attend where his mother had been to school was made by Luke and his mother. The pressure to be like the other local children, the demands on a mother with two children to be able to access schools easily without extra cost were the factors driving this decision, a decision not based on the quality of education provided but driven by the social and economic demands on the family. The ability to use all the data provided to weigh up educational provision is a luxury which for families on a low income is not within their sphere; it is not the ability to use the information that is significant here but the economics to make the choice. The reality for many families is that decisions are made against a weight of factors, some clearly understood, others having an influence sub-consciously or within the structural framework which the family find themselves in.

Luke's mother was concerned about her son attending the local school, as this was where her step sister would also be attending. His mother was resolute that Luke would be brought up differently to the way she had been raised and found the closeness in age of her step-sister to Luke difficult, both in the reputation created and the ability of Luke to observe the life values displayed by members of his extended family.

"My younger step sister has not done well at school and this was hard as she grew up at a similar time to Luke, he would see her getting into trouble and see that my mum was not really doing anything about it. I wanted things different for my sons."

(Luke's mother)

- Peer group

Luke had a well-established friendship group, which had developed since primary school. The boys lived in the same local community and shared similar interests. Their family values differed, but these differences caused little impact upon the group until they were in the sixth form and decisions about staying on at school and entering further education divided the group.

"They don't have so much support from their parents who don't see education in the same way as our family. Their parents don't work and just sit around at home and I think this has influenced them a bit...I think my friends have been [influenced and] I have also been influenced by those in my year who have no ambition and I just know they will be like their brothers and sisters who just do nothing and will be here going to the pub when they are forty and in dead end jobs if in work at all, and I am not going to be like that."

Luke was fuelled by the same burning ambition as his mother had to 'escape' the spiral of academic failure and low income, but after his many years (key stage 1-3) of academic failure, (although having become a functional reader by the age of 13) he had a lot to overcome. At the end of key stage 4 his GCSE results were below the national expectation and the time and opportunity to better his chances were running out fast. It was going to take a great deal to prevent slippage into the similar cycle experienced by many on the estate. The question arose to whether having qualifications and access into higher education, even if not of the highest quality, would change things for Luke. Having the freedom to make that choice was important to Luke's mother and partner.

- School

"I was not doing all that well at first because I found it really hard to read, and then the new SENCo came and mum went to her and spoke about my problems and then she

had me tested outside of school and I had dyslexia but the previous SENCo did nothing about it. She put me on a reading course and I had one to one every day and I made 53 months reading age improvement in less than 8 months. Suddenly I could read in class and I became more confident and this made all the difference. I suddenly achieved things it was so good. Learning to read was the break point for me, if that had not happened I would never have known that moment when I did something and I thought wow I can do this and suddenly I wanted some more of it.”

Teachers often speak of the ‘light bulb moment’, the point when all the work comes together and the child suddenly says ‘yes I can do it’. Luke had such a moment, a point when a shift occurred, creating more than just the ability to read. Being literate meant the school curriculum could be accessed, and possibilities which could change the course of his life appeared. The identification of a child’s need and then the ability to create the appropriate provision within the school system to address this need was essential for Luke to experience the reading support and make the necessary changes. Having the specialist teacher in post, the resources to address the need and the support of the child and parent to address the need came together at a key point for Luke. In schools where the rate of special educational needs (SEN) is continually high, a student can be overlooked, or the moment to address the educational needs is missed; a student having the right provision should not be down to chance but the reality is that teachers are playing roulette with young people’s lives on a daily basis. With pressure on school budgets, and the changes related to SEN funding, teachers are forced to decide who can, using the universal education funding for children with additional needs, receive additional support or resources and who will not. The impact of such decisions could be positive life changing moments as it was for Luke, while for others who have not gained the same chance, the reverse may be the outcome.

- Future career and higher education choices

In year 9, Luke had not really considered going to university and did not see this as part of his plan. By the beginning of his sixth form studies the situation for Luke had changed and he was considering going to university. His GCSEs were very poor but he had gained a place on a BTEC diploma course which would lead to the possibility of enough UCAS points for a university course. He had a clear idea of the type of course he wanted and was determined to apply. Luke started to voice a different view to that held by his friends, who were also showing a wish to attend university but had only considered the local university.

“I want to go to university, I know I won’t have the very best results but mum and I have looked on the computer and found some courses, foundation degrees in technical music industry and I am keen to do this, there is a course at the local university where my

friends are looking to go as well but there are also some good courses in the north of the country.”

Luke did not gain a place through the open application process as his final results were two passes, rather than the merit grades required. His mother worked hard with him and he went through the UCAS clearing system and gained a place at University of Leeds on a foundation course for Technical Music. His friends did not apply through the clearing system and entered jobs in the local retail market instead. The divergence of parental dispositions at this point was clear to see; Luke’s mother saw the opportunity that was available and encouraged her son, his friends remained caught within the economic trap of needing to contribute to the family as well as the family wishing to stay together, to live as adults in the similar area, an unspoken expectation for the local working class community.

“At school they showed them many universities and he has always been interested in the lights and sound technical side of the theatre. Most of his friends had applied to local universities. He did apply locally at first but they all said no so we needed to hunt for a course that would take him, through clearing we found this new course. It has turned out to be a diamond in the rough as it is one of the best in the country for this particular area. We sat at the computer on results day and looked for this course. It was really hard to let him go to university but he wanted to go so we looked. This course said come up and see us so we drove all the way up there and had a look around. He had an interview. It is an amazing place. Some of his mates were going to go to university but they did not go. They have families that play the system and make sure they get as much out of the government as possible they don’t drive their children forward. They did not want them to go they wanted them close to home. We have an ethos in this family to have a go.”

Although Luke has been able to achieve one aspiration by going to university, he still had according to middle class values, fairly low level success criteria for his life, stressing the desire to be ‘happy’ and to have a house, enough money to provide for his family and a job he enjoyed.

“I think having a house and a family and being in a job that I enjoy. I might live locally but I would be happy to leave as long as I could see mum and Steve at times. I would like enough money to provide for my family and enjoy life and have friends around me.”

Luke saw that his mother had been the change maker in his life; she had pushed him hard while providing the support he required. He was also aware the part that the school had played in changing his early life opportunities and removing the barriers which stood in his way. Luke’s philosophy for life was to take opportunities as they were presented to him, he did not have

an overall game plan but held a strong belief that things could be different for him and he did not have to follow the same path taken by the majority of young people living on the estate.

d) Concluding points

Luke's family background had many similarities to the other students in this research. Luke's background showed a higher level of disadvantage than some of the other students at the time of his birth, but the situation improved when his mother met her long term partner. The family was classed as 'hard-pressed', had adults, who worked locally, with limited educational background, had a local extended family and his mother had a long term connection to the estate.

Luke's educational background did show some divergence compared to the others in the survey. Luke had very low levels of attainment throughout key stage 1, 2, and 3 due to his learning difficulties. What he did have was a clear 'take-off' point which signalled a change in motivation and aspiration.

What was clear from the students in this research was the strong dispositions held which differed from the general habitus of the local estate. Luke's mother illustrated this well, having the firm desire, which influenced her actions, to ensure that the life opportunities her son had would not be the same as she had experienced (consciousness catalyst, Kupfer, 2015).

This driving aspiration had not influenced all the practices observed connected to academic achievement for Luke. However, throughout his childhood the number of opportunities to develop and practice literacy skills had increased; these aided Luke's overall progress and his end result at age 19. In terms of language development, although conversation at meal times was limited, he had within the family other opportunities for language development and the acquisition of knowledge. Family wealth restricted the provision of books at an early age for Luke but the use of the library compensated to a degree for this. In his later childhood due to higher family income some books had been purchased for all members of his family. His key role model for reading came from Steve, his mother's partner. His mother studied hard to progress through a new career pathway working towards further GCSEs, access course for university, TA qualifications and various administrative qualifications. Luke had in his late childhood, strong role models in both his mother and Steve. The trigger point for the change in Luke's academic progress came about when the school's special needs teacher taught him to read. This gave Luke the ability to re-engage with education and then take a wider interest in other school activities. The greatest difference for Luke was the attitude his mother had toward him attending university compared to that of his friends' families. His friends were being asked to contribute financially to their families while Luke's mother was happy to allow Luke

to enter university living off a student loan and maintenance grant. Luke provided for this research a strong comparison to those students in the survey who were progressing well at key stage 3 and exceeded expectations at key stage 4.

Table 4.15 -The overall data for High achievers group.

Academic History	Mark	Ashlee	Grace	Ricky	Yvonne	Leanne	Becky
Key stage 1 results	2b,2b,2b	2a, 2b, 2a	2a,2a,3	2b,2b,2b	2b,2a,2a	2a,2b,2a	2a,3,3
Key stage 2 results	4a,4b,4c	4a,4a, 4a,	5,5,5	4c,4c,4b	5,4a,5	5,4b,4c	5b,5a,5b
Key stage 3 results	5a,5b,5c	6a,6b,6a	6a,6a,7a	5b,5c,5b	6a,5a,6b	6c,6a,6c	6c,6a,6c
Key stage 4 Results	5xA,2xB, 2xC	8xA, 2xB	8 x A*, 2 x A	3xA*,5xA,2xB	1xA*, 5xA, 2xB,2xC	4xA*,1xA,5xB,1xC	3xA*, 4xA, 3xB
Key stage 5 Results	AAB	A,A,D	B,C,C.	A,B,B	A,A,B,D	B,C,C	
University	Exeter	Gloucester	Queen Mary's	Durham	Nottingham	Birmingham City	
CATS Score Mean SAS	93	94	93	96	102	91	122
CATS Score Mean verbal	101	102	107	100	94	92	120
CATS Score Mean Quantative	88	102	99	108	102	92	120
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	91	96	102	79	109	90	122
Jesson Rating	above	above	High	above	High	above	High
Socio-economic status							
Mother's occupation	Semi-skilled	Semi-skilled	Manual	semi-skilled	Manual	Manual	Semi-skilled
Father's occupation	Foreman		Manual	Manual	Manual	Manual	
Acorn Economic Group	Mod. Means	Hard pressed	Hard Pressed	Mod. means	Moderate means	Hard pressed	Moderate means
IDACI	0.387	0.41	0.317	0.478	0.54	0.317	0.177
Free School Meals	No	No	No	No	No	No	yes
House Type	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Rented	Owner-occupied	Rented	Rented	Rented	Rented	owner occupied
Family Size	2+2	1+3	2+2	2+2	2+1	2+4	1+1
Position in siblings	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	1st	4th	1st
Parental status	Married	Divorced	Married	Married	Married	re-married	Single/married
local extended family	Grandparents	Grandparents	No	Yes	no	yes - Many	One grandparent

Educational Influences / Dispositions	Mark	Ashlee	Grace	Ricky	Yvonne	Leanne	Becky
Parental Education	GCE/RSA	CSE/RSA	GCSEs/A Levels	up to GCE	None	CSE/RSA	GCE/CSE
Choice of School	Local	Local	Local	Brother at school	Spaces available	Local	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	Yes	No	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Influences on changed decision	Sister	Uncle/Friends	Father	Brother		Sister	School
Homework	at home	at home	in school	In School	In School	in school	at home
attendance at school	98%	98%	98%	97%	95%	92%	94%
Career aspiration	Teacher	Police	Medicine	Teaching	Not Sure	Not sure	Bus. Management
Family Practices							
Actions of Parents	encouragement	encouragement	Encouragement	Encouragement	Dad helped	little support	play games
Relationship to staff	Med. Influence	strong Influence	Strong Influence	Strong Influence	Medium Influence	Medium Influence	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	Med. Influence	strong Influence	Strong Influence	Strong Influence	Medium Influence	strong Influence	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	No	Uncle	Cousin	Brother	Father	Friend/sister	grandfather
Parents read to them	Father	Mother	No	yes	no	no	yes
student reads at home	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Books within the home	yes	No	No	yes	no	no	no
Eat as a family	Yes	Yes	Weekends	Weekends	Weekends	no	Weekends
Holidays/ Days out	Yes	Yes	Yes Days out	Yes	Yes	yes	visit family

Table 4.16 -The overall data for lower achievers group.

Academic History	Billy	Louise	Sam	Sue	Tony	Scott	Luke
Key stage 1 results	2a,2a,3	2a,2a,3	2a,2c,2b	3,2c,2b	2c,2b,2a	2b,2c,2a	B,B,N
Key stage 2 results	5c,5c,5b	5,4a,5	4a,4c,4c	5,4c,4a	4c,3b,4c	4c,4b,4b	B, 3.2, 3.4
Key stage 3 results	5a,5b,5c	6c,5b,6a	5a,4a,5c	5c,5a,5b	4c,4a,4b	5c,4b,5b	4c,4c,4c
Key stage 4 Results	1xA, 1xB,7xC	3xA,4xB,2xC	3xA*, 7xB, 1xC	1xB,7xC,1xD,1xF	10xC, 2x F	2xB, 4xC, 2xD, 2xE	1 x D, 6 x F
Key stage 5 Results	Repeat year 12	C, Merit & Dist.	A,A,B	B,B,D,U	merit, merit	merit, merit, merit, merit	(resit Maths/English C) Pass x 2
University		M&S Retail Store	Leicester	Aberystwyth	Looking for work	Gloucestershire	Leeds (Foundation Degree)
CATS Score Mean SAS	90	92	90	93	79	83	81
CATS Score Mean verbal	103	92	99	98	80	78	81
CATS Score Mean Quantative	76	100	91	94	77	86	86
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	92	84	80	88	81	85	78
Jesson Rating	High	High	Above	above	average	above	Below
Socio-economic status							
Mother's occupation	Professional	Office/Semi-skilled	Office/semi-skilled	Manual	Manual	semi-skilled	Manual
Father's occupation	Office	Office/Semi-skilled	Manual	Manual	Manual	Manual	Manual
Acorn Economic Group	Hard Pressed	Moderate Means	moderate means	Hard pressed	Hard pressed	Hard pressed	Hard pressed
IDACI	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.49	0.54	0.54	0.317
Free School Meals	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
House Type	semi-detached	semi-detached	detached	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached	semi-detached
Rented or owner occupied	Owner-occupied	Owner-occupied	owner occupied	Rented	Rented	Rented	Rented
Family Size	2+2	2+2	2+1	2+3	2+2	2+2	2+4
Position in siblings	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	2nd	2nd	4th
Parental status	Married	Married	Married	Not Married	Re-married	married	re-married
local extended family	Grandparents	none	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes - Many

Educational Influences / Dispositions	Billy	Louise	Sam	Sue	Tony	Scott	Luke
Parental Education	Degree/A Levels	O Levels/A Levels	GCE/CSE	CSE/RSA	CSE/RSA	GCE/CSE	CSE/RSA
Choice of School	SEN Department	Good caring School	Local	Local	sister at school	Local	Local
Yr 9 University Aspiration	No	No	no	no	no	no	no
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Yes	May be	Yes	Yes	no	yes	Yes
Influences on changed decision	Mother	School/Friends	English Teacher	School/friends		PE Teacher	Sister
Homework	at home	at home	at home	in school	not often have any	not often have any	in school
attendance at school	95%	91%	95%	91%	94%	91%	92%
Career aspiration	Computer Game Design	Not sure	Police/teacher	not sure	Engineer	Sports management	Not sure
Family Practices							
Actions of Parents	Role Models	Encouragement	encouraged /helped	Encouragement	little support	wider support	little support
Relationship to staff	Little Influence	Medium influence	Medium Influence	Strong Influence	medium Influence	little Influence	Medium Influence
Relationship to Peers	Medium Influence	Medium influence	strong Influence	strong Influence	strong Influence	strong Influence	strong Influence
Influence of a single person	Hobbies Club	Grandfather/Aunt	Primary school teacher	Cousin	no	Football coach	Friend/sister
Parents read to them	Mother	Mother	yes	Yes	yes	yes	no
student reads at home	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Books within the home	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Eat as a family	No	Weekends	yes	Yes in evenings	yes	weekends	no
Holidays/ Days out	No	Visit Families	yes	Yes days out	yes	yes	yes

Chapter 5: The analysis of structures, dispositions and practices

This chapter follows the theoretical categories of structures, practices and dispositions, discussed in Chapter 2, in order to identify and classify the quantitative data which provides for the basic descriptors for the families in this study. Use is made of some of the qualitative data when it comes to elaborating on the role of dispositions.

The Structural Profiles

For this study the term working class was applied to a group of people who shared some economic and social characteristics.

The families' position in the economic structure for this study was constructed from examining the type of work parents were employed in, linked to income drawn from the acorn groupings data. Of the 14 mothers, 6 were employed in office based employment, ranging from skilled to semi-skilled. 5 were employed in manual work, 2 were semi-skilled and 1 professional (a newly trained teacher). The fathers (13 in number) were grouped in just two economic groups, 9 were manual (2 were skilled) and 2 were office based semi-skilled and skilled.

Table 5.1: Structural Profiles

Name	MOTHER job type	FATHER job type	Acorn Economic group	IDACI	FSM	House type	Rented or owned
Ashlee	Office/semi-skilled		Hard pressed	0.41	no	semi-detached	owner Occupied
Becky	Office/semi-skilled		Moderate Means	0.177	yes	semi-detached	owner Occupied
Billy	Professional	Office / skilled	Hard pressed	0.298	no	semi-detached	owner Occupied
Grace	Manual	Manual	Hard pressed	0.317	no	semi-detached	rented
Leanne	Manual	Manual	Hard pressed	0.317	no	semi-detached	rented
Louise	Office/semi-skilled	Office / skilled	Moderate Means	0.298	no	semi-detached	owner Occupied
Luke	Office/semi-skilled		Hard pressed	0.54	no	flat	rented
Mark	Office/ skilled	Manual	Moderate Means	0.387	no	semi-detached	rented
Ricky	Semi-skilled	Manual / Skilled	Moderate Means	0.478	no	semi-detached	rented
Sam	Office/ skilled	Manual / Skilled	Moderate Means	0.298	no	detached	owner Occupied
Scott	Semi-skilled	Manual	Hard pressed	0.54	no	semi-detached	rented
Sue	Manual	Manual	Hard pressed	0.49	no	semi-detached	rented
Tony	Manual	Manual	Hard pressed	0.54	no	semi-detached	rented
Yvonne	Manual	Manual	Moderate Means	0.54	no	semi-detached	rented

There were only two Acorn Economic groups represented, Hard Pressed (8) and Moderate Means (6). Hard Pressed income groups correlated to single parent families (3) and manual labourers (4). The anomaly was the one professional and office/skilled family who were classed as hard-pressed. The mother was a newly qualified teacher so would not have been earning a high professional wage at that stage. The father had retrained since leaving school and was also developing his career so not earning at his full potential.

The number of students claiming free school meals (FSM) did not link to those classified as 'Hard pressed' the lowest of the Acorn economic groupings. Becky who was from a single parent family, was classified as being of moderate means. Her mother worked in an office based job and was semi-skilled. Due to her mother's illness which was classed as a disability, Becky was the only student within the group eligible for FSM and received the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school to give enrichment to the student to increase academic progress). The benefits paid related to education did not seem fit for purpose, given this data. In this respect, Becky's case is an exception and also an important signal that the classification system, for those in difficult circumstances, may not reflect their experience. Having crude methods of measuring need, which are more aligned to the bureaucratic administration of the system, leaves many below the poverty line and caught within poverty, served by an education, health and social support system, which are under resourced. These findings equate to those of Marshall (2013), who observed that of those pupils classified in 'The Tail', only 25% claimed Free School Meals and therefore few benefited from the additional funding provided to schools via the pupil premium.

The IDACI data score and the total GCSE points score for each student was compared and produced a weak negative correlation. The negative correlation showed that as deprivation increased the GCSE point score decreased, this was in line with the general national pattern, but within this survey group there were a number who deviated from this trend significantly. Grace, Leanne, Ashlee, Ricky, Yvonne and Tony achieved above the correlation created by this small sample, which had within their year group achieved better than the overall trend. These six students achieved a higher number of GCSEs and higher grades for these qualifications than the general pattern, as their poverty levels increased, their qualifications remained above the trend line illustrating a weaker correlation.

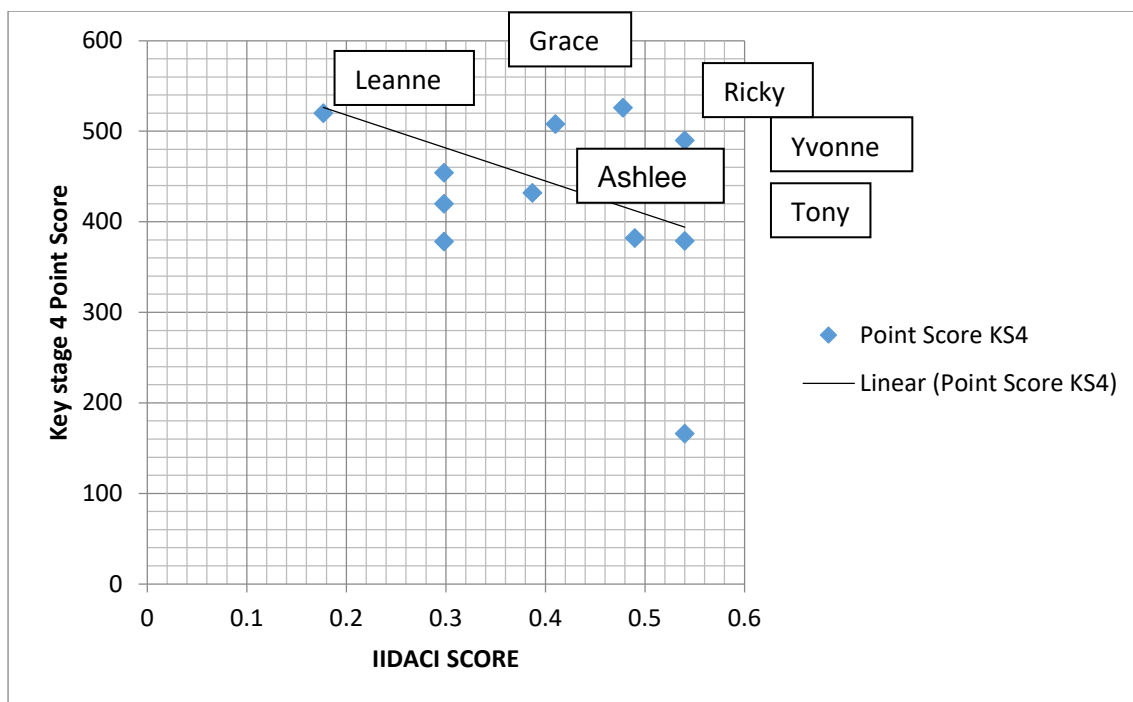


Figure 5.1: Graph showing the correlation between key stage 4 Point scores and IDACI scores

The housing for the sample reflected the two estates which formed the catchment area of the research school. 12 families lived in semi-detached housing, 1 in a flat and 1 detached housing. The estate was primarily post war pre-fabricated semi-detached houses, with a few blocks of flats in one of the estates. Due to the narrowed IDACI index of the survey group compared with the overall school values, the lowest IDACI ratings were drawn from the area which contained the flats. On the edge of the estate there were some detached houses. These tended to be later additions to the estate. Five families in this sample lived in owner-occupied housing, with the largest proportion still within the rented market, either council owned, or housing association, with a smaller proportion of privately rented. Four of the parents expressed the wish to become a home owner, but were looking to move properties to a 'better' area before they would be happy to invest in a mortgage. Due to the quality of the housing, the market value was greatly depressed and this restricted access for home owners to move out. Much of the social housing which had been purchased from the local authority, has transferred into the private rented sector or into the housing association rented provision. The effect of the poor market value coupled with a 'poor area' reputation, produced a 'ghettoization effect', further distancing and isolating these two communities from the rest of the urban landscape.

	High Achievers Group (Total 7)	Lower Achievers group (Total 7)
Owner occupied	2	3
Rented	5	4
Hard Pressed	3	5
Moderate Means	4	2
Only child	2	1
Youngest	3	4
Oldest	1	2
Middle	0	1
Married	4	4
Local extended family	4	6

Table 5.2: Comparison between structural factors of High and Lower achievers

The data above shows that more students in the lower achievers group were both Hard Pressed and also home owners which may seem surprising. The Acorn data which draws from the census and life style data looks more at immediate available wealth rather than long term investment which might account for this difference. Not all western cultures have a home owning structure; this system causes additional structural pressures on families reducing mobility and immediately available capital affecting their daily standard of life. A home owning society also invests less in a social housing culture, resulting in shortages in good quality rented housing.

Name	Family Size	Sibling position	Parental Status	local extended family	Parental Education
Ashlee	1+3	1	Divorced/single	Grandparents (1) Family (1)	CSE/RSA
Becky	1+1	1	Married/separated	Grandparents (1)	GCE/CSE
Billy	2+2	2	Married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	Degree / A levels
Grace	2+2	1	Married	family (1)	None
Leanne	2+4	4	re-married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	CSE/RSA
Louise	2+2	1	Married	Grandparents (1)Family (1)	O/A levels
Luke	2+2	1	Single/with partner	Grandparents (1) Family (1)	None
Mark	2+2	2	Married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	GCE/RSA
Ricky	2+2	2	Married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	GCE
Sam	2+1	1	Married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	GCE/CSE
Scott	2+2	2	Married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	GCE/CSE
Sue	2+3	3	not married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	CSE/RSA
Tony	2+3	2	re-married	grandparents (2) Family (2)	GCE/CSE
Yvonne	2+1	1	Married	family (1)	None

Table 5.3: Structural Family Profiles

With the family structure data added to the overall profile picture of the survey group, it can be seen that four of the group were only children, six of the group came from two children families, three had a family with three children and just one had a family with four children. Half of the group were the eldest child, four were the youngest in the family, with only Sue being a 'middle' child within a family. Comparing achievement against place order of the child within the family

showed little relationship. The sample selected from the top performers in the year group provided a mixture of placings within the family, but the sample was not large enough to place judgements on the 'middle children', while the pattern overall did show that those in the highest achieving group were reasonable evenly spread, being the youngest, oldest and an only child.

Order of child in siblings	Percentage in high achievers group (5 A*-A at GCSE)
Only child	2 out of 3
Youngest child	3 out of 5
Oldest child	3 out of 6
Middle child	0 out of 1

Table 5.4: Sibling order within the family

The interviews showed that those students who had older brothers and sisters benefited from the older sibling laying the path ahead for them. All three students had in their older sibling a role model for university entrance. Scott followed his sister to the same university. Ricky was driven by the competition with his brother, who enrolled on a course, then selected to attend a local college. Ricky was determined to achieve more than his brother, he achieved his ambition and entered a Russell Group University several hundred miles from his home. Mark followed a similar route as his sister, selecting a different Russell Group university to his sister but following the advice to select a highly regarded course and establishment. Establishing a changed culture within the family eased the passage for academic success and improvement for these younger siblings, which contributed to overall academic success.

Eight of the students had both parents who were in their first marriage, one lived with both birth parents (unmarried), three lived with a single parent, and two lived with a parent who had re-married. Research (Rushton and Turner 1975, McNamara Horvat et al, 2006) related to the impact of family structure showed a positive relationship between family stability and academic success. The students' family structure showed that of the high achievers group four had parents who were married, with an additional one, whose parents although not married lived together since their birth. Five therefore had grown up in a household which might have aided their academic success, but should be viewed more as an environmental setting factor rather than a direct contributing factor. The remaining two students of the high achievers group had either a parent who was long term divorced or parents who had separated while at secondary school. McNamara Horvat et al (2006) argued that a stable family life, where the child was supported by both parents, was more likely to be found in middle class households. What the research showed here was that in both the high achievers group and the lower achievers group, both were dominated by parents being married or living as a couple. The same

percentage pattern was reflected for both groups, mirroring the findings of McNamara Horvat et al for academic success but found within a working class situation. This questions whether academic success is linked to family marital structure.

There was a high proportion of the survey group (8) that had both sets of grandparents and additional extended family members living in the local town area. This characteristic was well documented in past research. Young and Wilmott's (1952) study of Bethnal Green showed that it was typical for working class families to live in the same communities and for there to be regular daily contact across the extended family. Eleven of the cohort had their extended family living locally and were in at least weekly contact with one of them. As we shall see the extended family offered additional support, role models, opportunities for language development through discussion, wider opportunities beyond the family home and the development of a competitive spirit. Four of the high achievers group had local extended family compared to all the lower achievers group. The influence of a family having a strong negative contribution to educational success, should be considered here, as a further barrier that children of locally established families would have to overcome in order to succeed, as suggested by the Young and Wilmott (1952) study. Only one of the students described this as a factor they had to overcome. For Leanne this was a challenge she accepted. Leanne was however one of the students in the research whose change came about more rapidly but was supported by friends and her older sister; they provided the same positive message from two different viewpoints, strengthening the drive forward for Leanne into a new way of life.

Parental educational achievement did show a high level of consistency, with ten of the parents completing their full time education at the age of 16 leaving with a small collection of 'GCE 'O' levels, CSEs and RSAs. Three left with no qualifications at all, finishing at 14 or 15 years of age. Only two went on to post 16 education, one completing GCE 'A' levels and one parent finished education at 16 returned to education later.

Discussion of Practices

a. School attendance

Attendance at school is a measure that is used to show the level of risk a student is of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). All the students within the research group had a level of academic success and an attendance rate above 90% which placed them as a low risk of being classed as NEET. 6 students who achieved 5+ A*/A grade GCSEs had an attendance rate above 95%, with 4 of the group with a level of 97% and above. No student had a 100% attendance rate. Leanne, who stated that her mother took little interest

in her schooling, had the lowest attendance rate of the higher attainment group. The second lowest was Becky, whose mother required a level of care from her daughter at times. Luke's mother made special reference to the importance of Luke attending school, since her own mother had not made her go to school. Luke's mother saw that this had strongly affected her own education and was not going to allow this to happen to her own son. Although the sample group was small, there was a positive correlation between those who had a higher level of GCSE attainment and those with the higher attendance rates.

Research (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2006, Lamdin, 1996 and Nichols, 2003) showed that students who had higher attendance rates had higher overall attainment. This small sample had the same overall pattern. Four out of the top high achieving group had an attendance rate of 98-97% while the highest three in the lower attainment group had an attendance rate of 95%. The average attendance rate of the highest achievement group in this survey was 96% compared with the second group of 93%; a difference of six days additional attendance in one academic year. This difference is not significant enough to draw a full conclusion, but may be a contributing factor. Not being present in school disadvantages a student from the rest of the class both academically and socially. Students, who have an additional burden of being a young carer or have emotional pressure due to tensions within the home, are all likely to miss school and on return there is a settling down period as they refocus back into school life.

b. Language development

A further practice that was examined was that of a family eating together, seeing this as a point at which the meal would have quality conversation and development of social conventions. Bernstein's socio-linguistic theory (1958) and Hanson (2002) showed the difference between the speech of middle and working class, while Labov (1970) concluded that there are different types of speech used between the classes; that used by the middle classes dominated school education. The type of language used within a school may restrict access for working class students into the educational world and this could impact possible academic success. Three of the survey group did eat together as a family and expressed that this was a time when the family talked together. A further six said that they eat as a family at weekends only. The remaining five stated that they never eat together as a family and so had little regular opportunity to develop family based conversational skills. Of those who did eat regularly together, two of the three, were in the high achievers group. However the remaining five of the high achieving group did not eat regularly together and had limited family time for discussion. Therefore it is not conclusive to state that regular time as a family spent in social conversation did help to improve language skills which added to the success of the high achievers group.

The reasons given for the lack of eating together varied from not having a dining table, to parental working hours not allowing for this convention. Leanne showed a degree of social isolation within her household. When asked about eating together she expressed, *“No, we eat on the sofa. If mum can be bothered to cook we eat together, but if not we have to cook our own food.”* A meal time was not seen as a social point for the family, instead, eating was reduced to a basic necessity. Speaking to family members, for Leanne, was reduced to times when she needed to discuss things with them, rather than having the space and time as a young person to explore language and develop conversation and the ability to think and reflect on a variety of ‘world’ and ‘life’ concepts. This was in comparison to Billy, who spoke about his family conversations both at meal times and other ‘family time’ occasions; *“We did, not so much now... if I come into the living room and dad is watching a documentary. I would look at it and think this looks interesting and sit down with dad and we would chat about it afterwards. He likes science, so we do tend to have a lot of ‘off the wall’ conversations over science.”*

Half the families did not have opportunities to practice language skills at meals times, although beyond this data collection, it would be interesting to compare more students who had developed conversational skills in the working class background and its effect on their study skills especially at A-level and beyond. All three students (Mark, Ricky and Sam) who had sustained opportunities throughout adolescence for language development achieved high levels of academic attainment at A-level scoring 340 or 320 UCAS points. However, this was not observed as a constant factor. Some students who scored highly at GCSE, did not develop this into their A-level studies, which required a higher level of critical thought and discussion. Having not had sustained opportunities in earlier childhood or throughout adolescence did not provide them with the practice to develop these skills, which could then be applied to their academic work. The only other student who achieved highly at A-level was Yvonne, who achieved 400 UCAS points, in Computer Studies, Business and English, a more vocational pathway. These top four students all had the skills to write fluent university applications and secure places in top universities (Exeter, Durham, Leicester and Nottingham). All students in the sixth form received support from their Head of Year and tutor in writing their application, building on what they had previously prepared.

c. Reading practices in the home.

Name	Reading Age (year 7)	parents read to them	student reads at home	Books within the home	Parents read
Billy	13.05	yes (Mother)	yes	yes	yes
Grace	12.09	no	yes	no	no
Louise	11.11	yes (Mother)	yes	yes	yes
Leanne	11.09	no	no	no	no
Mark	11.09	yes (Father)	yes	yes	yes
Sam	11.09	yes (Mother)	yes	yes	yes
Yvonne	11.09	no	yes	no	no
Becky	11.06	no	yes	yes	no
Sue	11.06	yes (Mother)	no	no	no
Ricky	11.03	yes (Both)	yes	yes	no
Ashlee	11.02	yes (Mother)	yes	yes	no
Scott	11.01	yes (Mother)	no	yes	yes
Tony	11.01	yes	no	yes	no
Luke	6.09	yes (Mother)	no	yes	no

Table 5.5: Reading practices within the home.

The two areas of practice which have been considered are: the impact of books within the home, and parents who modelled reading to their children. Nash and Harker (2006) found that 20% of unskilled family homes had 100 or more children's books within the home and there was a correlation between higher reading ages and those students who had books within their homes. They further added that the time parents spent reading with their children added to the reading ability of children and found that only 29% of unskilled parents surveyed read to their children. Four of the high achievers group had more than 50 books at home, of the remaining three, one used the library replacing the availability of books at home, and the final two had limited access to books within the home and due to parental hours of work were unable to access the library. In comparison six of the lower achieving group had more than 50 books within the home and the remaining student used the library. Access to books alone was not the key to academic achievement having a parent who read to their children was critical.

The data collected from the interviews when compared to the student's reading ages brings forth some points worthy of consideration. The student with the highest reading age at the age of 11 years old (Billy) was significantly higher than the rest of the survey cohort. Billy had a home that fostered a positive reading culture. However, the data for Grace (second highest reading age) showed an opposite situation, she personally liked to read but had no home practices which had fostered this; she had been brought up by her grandparents who she described as illiterate. The comparison with reading ages and practices formed no overall

patterns. Billy, Louise and Sam who had reading ages in the top half of the survey group, were the only ones who demonstrated a positive reading culture across the aspects discussed at interview. However, this higher reading age at 11, although bringing forth positive academic results, did not result in these students achieving the highest academic achievement. All three students gained 2 A*-A grade GCSEs rather than the higher achievement level of 5 A*-A grades. Sam was the only student in the cohort who had a strong reading age and had developed his language skills from an early age.

Within this research, ten of the students stated that they had been read to as a child. This was the same percentage as students who had more than 100 books within their house. Two of the students appeared in different groups. Sue's mother read to her but they did not have the 100 or more books within the home, while Becky had the books within the home but had no parent who had read to her. Nine of the students liked to read by themselves for pleasure, while only five had parents who they saw reading for pleasure within their home, which provided a good role model for them. The relationship between the higher attaining group and their pattern of reading compared to the practices and achievement of lower attainment group did not correlate. The pattern in this small sample was reversed with books and reading being more common in the lower achieving group rather than the higher achieving group.

	Higher achieving group	Lower achieving group
Parents read to them	3	7
Students read for pleasure	6	3
100+ books within the home	4	6
Parents model reading	1	4

Table 5.6: Reading practices and academic success levels.

The only measure which the higher attaining group had a higher frequency of was for personal reading, which does not correlate to the higher availability of books or that parents were modelling good private reading practice. This research does not equate to all the findings of Nash and Harker (2006). If the top achievers (the swots) had been compared with those students who were 'getting in', those not wishing to engage with the school environment but preferred the laddish culture, a different pattern may have appeared. However, schools do not work with students only at the two extremes and understanding the nuances of what helps students improve academic achievement was the focus of this study. The patterns observed in this group of students does not add further evidence rather it challenges previous findings.

d. Wider family experiences and holidays

Linked to the language development of the child is the exposure of children to new and wider experiences. Rees (1968) wrote about how the fantasy world of a working class child was restricted to the everyday experiences that they have had. A middle class child, who had visited more places and had greater exposure to the wider world, was able to use this for more creative thinking and imaginative writing. When the survey group were asked about holidays the majority (ten) showed that they had been on holiday if not regularly. Six of the higher achievers group had regularly been on holiday, compared to four of the lower achievers group. One student explained that holidays were normally spent visiting family members who lived away from the core family, but this limited the areas that they experienced to a British context and also to a limited number of places visited. Two students had never been on holiday and had limited experience of the world beyond the estate. Mark's family were guided by the school and when the school suggested that a particular school trip would enrich his educational experience, they saved in order that their son may go on a particular visit even if the rest of the family would not go on holiday that year. Mark, Grace, Yvonne and Ricky all in the higher achievers group, all took part in school based visits which encouraged the family to regularly visit local sites of educational interest. These four students displayed a growing hunger for learning and knowledge, throughout their teens, and these experiences fuelled their academic learning. Having wider experiences would have added to the richness of their learning experience but there is no conclusive evidence to show that holidays and wider experience are a key to higher level attainment within white working class families.

e. The family home providing a place of learning

The practice of completing homework within the home situation was discussed with the students. Research is mixed about the impact that homework has upon academic achievement. Cooper, Robinson and Patall (2006) showed the positive impact of homework completion upon short term test results but the long term impact was more difficult to assess. The survey group showed that five of the higher achieving group completed homework at home, with the remaining two of this group studying after school in the homework facilities due to lack of space or a quiet environment at home. Within the lower achievement group four completed homework at home, one in school and two frequently did not complete or have homework set to complete. Overall nine of the group did homework within the home supported by their parents. Setting up a culture where education is valued and the family gives time and space to encourage the completion of homework has shown to have a positive impact upon students' academic success (Cooper, 1989). The quality of the homework set also has an impact (Kohn, 2006). The evidence again is not highly conclusive to whether homework

completion enables higher academic achievement, however, the inclusion of this practice does not appear to have a negative effect.

f. Following in the 'family trade'

A characteristic trait of the traditional working class is the passing down of the family trade. Young and Wilmott's (1957) study of kinship in East London described this as one of the three main traits they observed. This practice maintained the family within a particular socio-economic group and it was a key feature of this group that they sought to break from the accepted pattern. They showed a desire to enter the public services and gain professional status as a doctor, vet, teacher or policeman. This contrasted with the lower achieving group who looked for more vocational jobs in game design, technical stage management, sports management and engineering. Two of the lower attaining group had followed or shown an interest to be employed in a similar field as their parents.

The research group data showed that structurally they were economically within the 'Hard-pressured' and 'moderate means' income classification, their parents held jobs dominated by manual or semi-skilled classification. Academically the parents of the research group students had limited qualifications and few had progressed their education beyond the compulsory age of 16. Academic achievement was an accessible means for the students to alter this pattern and move beyond their families' current socio-economic group.

Dispositions

The dispositions impacting on the students covered a large scope of their life, influencing the choices made about school selection, aspirations to continue into higher education and career pathways. How, who, and why these choices were made was not always evident to the researchers or to the students within the survey. What was evident was the influence particular groups had upon them, the main three being their family, their friends and the school community. Linked to each of these groups were a set of values which although unseen manifested themselves in ways that impacted the decisions made. For example, a parent stated, "we never thought about him going to university", this was understandable, going to university was beyond their experience, and not normally seen as an option.

Name	Parental Education	Choice of School	Year 9 Uni. Asp	Year 12 Uni. Asp	Influences on changed decision	Career aspiration
Ashlee	CSE/RSA	Local	no	yes	Uncle / friends	Police
Becky	GCE/CSE	Local	no	yes	School	Vet
Billy	Degree / A levels	SEN department	no	yes	Mother	Game design
Grace	None	Local	yes	yes	Father	Medicine
Leanne	CSE/RSA	Local	no	yes	Sister	not sure
Louise	O/A levels	good caring school	no	maybe	School / friends	not sure
Luke	None	SEN department	no	yes	School / mother	Tech stage manage
Mark	GCE/RSA	Local	yes	yes	Sister	Teacher
Ricky	GCE	brother at school	yes	yes	Brother	not sure
Sam	GCE/CSE	Local	no	yes	English Teacher	Teacher
Scott	GCE/CSE	Local	no	yes	PE Teacher	sports management
Sue	CSE/RSA	Local	no	yes	School/friends	not sure
Tony	GCE/CSE	sister at school	no	no		Engineer
Yvonne	None	spaces available	yes	yes	Family	not sure

Table 5.7: The dispositions – values within educational background and future

Choice of School

The second group of data collected primarily from the student/parental interviews sought to gain an insight into the values the family placed on significant educational decisions and their aspirations. The two estates the survey group lived in, were served by one comprehensive school, although there were two other schools available a short distance away, and a further three schools which required a moderate bus trip. The majority of the schools within the town had secondary schools places available; none were oversubscribed due to secondary school expansion occurring ahead of town development. The impact of this upon family decisions meant that the majority of parents gained their first choice place and therefore selecting the catchment area school was not a 'must' to ensure gaining your first choice school place. The decision of eight students attending the survey school because it was local was not a decision made due to limited educational choice. Two parents selected the school because it had a good reputation for managing students with special educational needs, although for both these students it is also their local school. Two parents stated that their son/daughter had followed an elder sibling into the school, and this was their local school. The remaining three who gave the reasons of 'spaces being available' and the 'school provides a caring environment' joined the school after the initial intake in year 7. There was a correlation between those parents who achieved qualifications post 16 and those being able to give a reason for why they selected the school that their child attended. This correlation would suggest that since the parents had some degree of achievement within the educational system, they had taken a greater interest in the selection of their child's school.

Future Careers and Higher Education

The changing aspirations of the students were evident between year 9 and 12. When questioned about their wish to attend university, only four of the students in year 9 (Grace, Mark, Ricky, and Yvonne) wished to attend university, by year 12 their aspirations had changed and only Tony did not wish to attend university. Tony was adamant that he was not going to university, instead he wished to gain an engineering apprenticeship; he understood the need to gain further qualifications.

Grace and Yvonne were both the eldest child in their families and their parents both had left school without educational qualifications. Mark's and Ricky's parents gained some qualifications but both had an elder brother/sister who attended university/Higher Education. Only one of the students' parents had studied for a degree (with the Open University) and had studied as a mature student. Twelve students in the research group were to be the first person in their family to attend university. They conveyed in year 12 that their decision was influenced by three key things, firstly by school staff and visits/talks they had received about university; secondly a family member, either a sibling or parent who attended or wished they attended university; and thirdly their own friends.

All the students were aspirational about their career, seven wanted careers in public services, police, doctor, or teachers. Three were unsure of their exact career pathway, but understood the need to gain further qualifications in order to gain employment that would allow them greater affluence and choice. Sam and Leanne articulated strong feelings about wishing to change and be different from others around them. Sam conveyed how he saw other young people who grew up on his estate, who did very little with their lives; even those who had jobs remained on the estate. The highlight to their week, Sam observed, was going 'down the pub with mates.' Sam also said that, although his father had a successful job, he had to work extremely hard, doing manual work and was very tired at the end of a long working day. He showed great respect for his father, but knew that if he could become well qualified, he would be able to gain more money and his choice of career would not be manual work. Leanne spoke about how her elder sister had started a family as a teenager, wished to return to college and then go to university to train to be a radiographer. She spoke about how her sister urged her to complete her education while she was of school age as it was far harder to return to education when you were older. Leanne compared her sister's attitude to her mother's attitude, who had communicated that Leanne should do 'whatever makes you happy'. Her mother's attitude, although she knew she cared, had little impact and Leanne voiced how she did not wish to become 'like her mother' and felt that her elder sister showed her a more positive way forward, and a way to 'escape' from where she saw her mother's life to be. Sam's mother was delighted by the fact he wished to go to university. She said that it was not something that

Sam's father and her had ever planned. It was beyond what they knew or had never experienced, and they felt ill equipped to assist him with his decisions. She strongly stated how much they both would support him throughout university and with any future career decisions he wished to make. *"I have always wanted him to just have fun and enjoy life and to help to mould him into a nice, kind and caring young man."*

Being the first generation in your family to enter university, have the prospect of a different career and future economic situation, is a significant point of change. A characteristic feature of the economic structure of the working class observed in Bethnal Green, East London in the 1950s (Young & Willmott, 1952) and again in Tower Hamlets, East London in 2000s (Evans, 2006) was the pattern of family members following similar employment as other family members, especially between the males and females within the family. The same pattern of copying the education pathway of parents is reflected in the middle classes with children even attending the same university as their parents. Middle class children often appear not to even make a decision to attend university; they just know it will happen (Reay et al, 2009). The students in this research had entered this point of significant change and key factors in their life had come together to create a new habitus. They were delaying their earning power and taking on a new value, understanding that delayed gratification would bring about the possibility of greater earning power in the future. Although accruing financial long term debt, of at least £27,000 due to the high level of university fees at £9,000 per year, the students had still made this step into unknown territory, with the vision of a better future. Helped along by elder siblings, encouraged by their school, and following the peer group was still not enough to make this step. The inner steel and determination shown to 'right a wrong', appeared to be an essential final ingredient to securing this final move, and being 'a fish out of water.' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)

Influence of a role model

Six of the seven high achieving group (who achieved 5+ A*/A GCSE grades) were encouraged and influenced by a family member to attend university. Only Becky, a single child living with a single parent felt that the school solely influenced her decision. Ashlee's mother spoke of the influence that her brother, Ashlee's uncle had upon her:

"My brother had a good influence on her, she loves him. He is two years older than me. He went off to Reading University with his work. He was the last year to be able to go into the sixth form so could get A-levels. He did Planning at university and worked in London, now he works in Switzerland. He has influenced her a lot, we all talked a lot about Mark influencing her, he spent time with her as he had his children later and she was the oldest grandchild."

(Ashlee's mother)

Ashlee's mother showed regret that she had been unable to further her own qualifications. She was pleased that her brother had achieved and had been a good role model for her daughter. In the interview conversation, when discussing her own educational experience, she related how her own school had changed to a secondary modern preventing her from taking the types of qualifications she wished she for. *"I went on to secondary school and took CSEs and RSAs. There were no 'O' levels done then because it was a secondary modern school. My brother who was two years older than I am was the last year to go into the sixth form."* There was a strong desire from a number of parents that their children would have the opportunity to do better than they had academically and 'escape'. Having a university education seemed to be the answer for the middle class, so was viewed as the escape mechanism to use.

Louise's mother was concerned that her daughter was following the same career path as her and her husband. Although she stated that being in the RAF had improved their life chances, she also believed that her daughter needed to make her own choices.

"Our daughter is not sure what she wants to do. We have tried to steer her when she has expressed an interest in something, like she said she wanted to work with children, then she expressed an interest in joining the RAF... She has not until recently said anything about going to university, but is thinking about this now, but I think that is the influence of the sixth form as they are all thinking about that now and she is easily led along. We are a little worried about the RAF direction because is she thinking that she should join up because we did."

(Louise's mother)

Louise's mother seemed concerned about both the decision to go into the RAF and the choice to go to university. She conveyed apprehension over the way her daughter had been influenced by the school and her school friends about going to university. She stressed unease about her daughter being 'easily lead'; a comment normally linked to wrong decision making rather than attending university. What was demonstrated by Louise's, Leanne's and Sam's parents was the feeling that they were ill equipped to help their child make critical life decisions. Their trepidation about moving into a world that was unknown to them, had made them react in a way that they believed to be caring, but portrayed a different message to their child; "enjoy life", "whatever makes you happy", "easily led" could be interpreted as an indifference to university attendance.

Name	Actions of Parents	relationship staff	relationship peers	single person
Ashlee	encouragement	strong influence	strong influence	Uncle
Becky	play games	medium influence	strong influence	Grandfather
Billy	role model study	little influence	medium influence	Hobbies club
Grace	encouragement	strong influence	strong influence	cousin
Leanne	little support	medium influence	strong influence	Friend / sister
Louise	encouragement	medium influence	medium influence	Grandfather
Luke	helped with read	medium influence	strong influence	SENCO/music teacher
Mark	encouragement	medium influence	medium influence	no
Ricky	encouragement	strong influence	strong influence	Sports club
Sam	Encouragement/helped with maths GCSE.	Good in Primary and 6 th Form	strong influence	Primary school Teacher
Scott	wider support	little influence	strong influence	football coach
Sue	encouragement	strong influence	strong influence	Friend
Tony	little support	medium influence	strong influence	no
Yvonne	Dad helped	medium influence	medium influence	Father

Table 5.8: Influences of parents, teachers and friends.

Within the parent and student interviews there was a strong consensus about the need to encourage their children to engage with school, and 12 encouraged and supported their child's educational development. Parents did however, state that due to their limited educational qualifications, they struggled to truly help with homework but felt that they supported their child through their words of encouragement. Grace relayed a regular routine that her father performed every day:

"Before I leave for school every day Dad says make sure you do well at school, it gets annoying every day, when you step out of the door you can hear him shouting this "make sure you do well at school, work hard, pay attention." And when I come home from school I hear, "what did you do at school. Come and tell me everything." Although he does not really understand the work he is still interested."

Ricky spoke of a similar routine he has with his mother, "*When I get home I normally dump my bag down and the first thing I do is start to talk with my mum about the school day.*" Half of the students mentioned that the key way their parents had aided their academic success was by encouragement. There was little correlation between the educational qualifications of the parents and the way they assisted their children. Only Leanne and Tony indicated that their parents gave them little support. Leanne said, "*My mum helps me, but she says just to do whatever makes me happy. She leaves it up to me, she trusts me I guess.*" Leanne recognised that her friends and older sister helped her more directly, and commented that her mother worked long hours since her father had left. He had helped her with her homework occasionally in the past. Billy stated that his mother acted as a role model for him, since she

had studied for an Open University degree, during his time at primary and lower secondary school.

“Mum did not do well in school but has completed qualifications with the Open University and has now a degree in mathematics... At first mum and dad were just like everyone else and had normal jobs then mum started to study and then got a job in school and that changed things.”

Luke struggled with his own reading; he acknowledged that although his mother left school with limited education, she worked hard to make sure he did well in school. Luke’s mother knew that her son was not developing well and was willing to fight for him.

Two other students spoke about their parental involvement in their academic success, Yvonne mentioned, “*My parents have insisted on me doing my homework*”. Yvonne showed awareness that her parents although wanting to help had not assisted her as much as other more educated parents might for their children.

“They have never been able to help me with my homework as they also don’t have the knowledge of the subjects I am studying so this has been hard. It would have been nice to have had them read to me, and I think it would have meant I knew more things and perhaps would not have had to work so hard.”

In contrast Becky spoke with pleasure about the way her mother had played educational games with her as a child which encouraged her maths skills and added to her early learning. Becky’s mother, although not highly successful in school, did complete O levels and then gained further training in work.

“I pick things up quickly as I am quite a good learner. My mum would play lots of games with me. I remember one which we called the hand up game. Mum would ask a lot of maths questions. I also have always done my homework with mum and I think a lot of my friends don’t do theirs. If they do they would just scribble it down or copy it off one of their friends.”

Throughout the interviews, there was a common theme amongst the parents, of an awareness that their own educational knowledge was lagging behind that of their children and that helping them was difficult. Sam’s mother spoke about how her son was in great need of passing his GCSE mathematics; they were concerned that due to his poor mock results he would not be accepted to do A-levels which they knew he was very keen to do. Sam perceived that he was not getting the support from school and he turned to his parents. Sam’s mother stated that she was not able to assist but Sam’s father used mathematics in his building work so was better matched to help him. She spoke about how her husband would read the text book and

together they worked out how to answer the questions. When they were completely stuck her husband would ring his friend and ask for help. Sam's mother was very proud that Sam had passed his maths GCSE and showed great awareness of the effort he and his father had put in to achieve this.

The impact of strong caring relationships with parents, staff and peers was a frequent point emphasised by all students in the survey. The relationship built between student and staff, or within peer groups was a strong influence in a high proportion of the students. The students stressed the impact of the relationship as being stronger than the actual lessons taught; a teacher who impacted upon their overall success was one that showed interest in them as a whole person, knew how they were doing, not just in their subject but generally in both school and their wider life. It was not that the teacher spoke in detail about the student's life but they showed they had time to listen, they smiled and asked how they were, would remember things they had said previously and would be able to comment on their future plans. Fried (2001) showed the importance of the teacher respecting the whole child and that the education of children was built upon a positive relationship created.

The role of the school in shaping success

Student	Key Influences	Contributing influences
Ashlee	Mother, and Uncle	School teacher, peers, school programmes, school environment
Grace	Father/brother (negative) Cousin, film about disease.	Peers especially Ricky School teachers, school programmes, school environment
Leanne	Sister and Peers especially Grace and Ricky	Science teacher Programmes in school School environment Support offered to parents by school.
Mark	Family	School Sports teams and staff Peers – competitive spirit
Ricky	Brother	School Teachers School Sports teams Peers especially Grace

		School programmes
Yvonne	Father	Supportive school environment School programmes
Becky	School programmes	Mother Peers
Billy	Mother	School support staff Hobbies Club Peers
Sam	School teachers – primary and English sixth form teacher	Parents
Scott	PE Teacher / Sports scholarship	Peers Parents Sister
Sue	School Event School teacher	Parents Friends Dance club at school
Tony	Father / Engineering course	Peers
Louise	Friends / School events	Parents Grandparents
Luke	Mother	School programme School Teachers

Table 5.9: Key and contributing influences upon the students

Four of the research group stated that school had a strong influence on their success, compared to ten who said that their peers had a strong influence on their academic achievement. Three quarters of the group who stated that school had a strong influence also said that their peers also had a strong influence. Only two students in the survey group felt that the school had little impact on their academic success. Scott, who had achieved his academic success through a sports scholarship, stated that his peers had the strongest influence, since they had encouraged him in his sports career and supported him when working towards the sports scholarship. Billy discounted the school as having influenced his success, even though he acknowledged that the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) had supported him. He focused on the support his friends gave him, and the Hobbies

Club, run within the school. The students who attended Hobbies Club, encouraged him and gave Billy self-belief. Sam stressed that there was a great difference between the support and encouragement he had gained in his primary and sixth form years and the school support offered in his secondary years.

The influence of one particular person was a dominant factor, (twelve students out of fourteen) which led to the overall success academically of this survey group. Six students named a member of their family or extended family, as the person they believed had given them focus and drive, which had led to their academic achievement. Only two students linked this person to a school teacher. Family and the wider life of the student produced the significant people of influence. Luke, guided by the SENCo, took a reading course which changed the course of his academic life. Although he attributes this course to the dramatic change, it was the professional judgement of the SENCo that caused this action to take place. School staff ensuring that appropriate decisions are made, having the right resources to meet the needs of the individuals is essential if improvements are to take place. Dramatic changes that have occurred to Special Educational provision since the Children and Families Act (2014) replacing SEN Statements with a new Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) could impact upon funding and therefore reduce the need for additional resources being available to bring about radical changes.

Academic success and the relationships created between one teacher and the student is an important factor. The holistic educational life of the student is critical and when a student felt cared for by one or many of their teachers, their positive attitude and belief in themselves and their school increased. Luke spoke of his relationship with a number of the drama and music staff who encouraged him and provided a wider educational experience. They encouraged him to study this subject at university. Scott, Mark, Ricky and Sue spoke of a sports or dance teacher who motivated them in sport, which improved their self-esteem. Ricky and Sue also spoke of a history teacher whose lessons were so engaging and gave them so much time that they worked harder and wanted to achieve to please her. Grace identified the senior leaders who may not have taught her, but by their 'meet and greet' ethos created a mood within the school, that individuals mattered to them.

The research school offered a wide variety of school trips and visiting speakers (filling the gaps in their experience), the Olympic Legacy programme (providing inspirational sports men and women to motivate the students), university visits, trips to theatres and a variety of visiting speakers related to A-level subjects. Alongside these activities the school curriculum took account of the limited engagement of some of its students to a purely academic curriculum. It was creative with resources and local partnerships to provide a work based curriculum which

was more in tune with some parental expectations. The engineering diploma and the Futsal scholarship provided a curriculum that challenged, motivated and created new educational opportunities, they weren't 'second best' but innovative, meeting the needs of the students, and driving forward academic success in a new way.

The influence that the school has upon parents, and therefore the students, should not be overlooked. Both Ashlee and Mark's parents spoke powerfully about the strong personal belief the school created for them that their children could succeed. The parents had great respect of the teaching profession and when they were told that their child could go to university, they believed this and did all in their power not to let the school down. Programmes like Aim Higher introduced students to university and helped to provide a foundation to these beliefs. Words alone may not have been enough, but these programmes generated further interest and the belief that this was achievable.

Peer Group Influences

The 'lads' culture and development of a 'duality of being' (Reay, 2006) was well illustrated by Scott, Sam and Tony. The duality of home versus street culture (Sam's parents' focus on the importance of working hard verses the need to fit in with the local street culture) or school versus home/local street culture (Scott's engagement with the school's Futsal scholarship programme being alien to his local street culture of non-engagement with education) caused a conflict of cultural messages and a struggle to survive both within the local environment and the school environment. For Sam, his parents provided a strong stable focus with clear messages backed up with home practices, which provided an escape route against the 'lad culture'.

Peer culture did show to be a positive force in creating a competitive spirit which motivated and challenged both the girls and the boys. The desire to achieve was observed to be quite strong and the school atmosphere fostered this while allowing a freedom for the individual to learn from mistakes made. The essential element appeared to be maintaining a balance between these two, so the competitive element pushed students forward, while the safe learning climate provided opportunity to build up the resilience to take greater risks to achieve success.

The peer support network created encouragement for each student. All students were in a broadly similar situation economically and socially; they had a strong awareness that the world was not an equal place and they did not have things 'easy'. They were developing an awareness that they had options for 'a way out', they did not have to accept the status quo. This awareness of their changing habitus provided new opportunities but this was at a cost and a loss of what they knew and had grown up within. For some of the students this changing

habitus was supported by their parents while for others the move away from the known habitus caused tension within the family and a sense of deep loss.

This internal struggle was articulated by some of the parents as a 'search for happiness'. Parents voiced a preference for performing a particular action driven by the desire to make their child happy. The expression of happiness appeared to work as a protective measure both for personal loss, as their child moved further away from the family habitus or to avoid disappointment being shown to a child who may have failed to achieve all they set out to do. Small steps of success did provide a platform to be more ambitious and seek a way forward to address the deprivation and cycle of poverty they themselves were caught in. Leanne and Scott illustrate this well, as both sets of parents re-engaged with school in year 10 and 11, when their daughter/son experienced levels of success within the school system.

The Academic Profiles

The students in the survey group were selected from year 9 students who had the highest Cognitive Ability Test score (CATs) rankings. A couple of the highest achieving students declined to take part in the survey, but there remained a fair spread of scores from 122 to 79. The National average CATs rating was 90-100 (9 of the sample were in this 'average' group). Students 'above average' gained CAT scores of 100-110, high cognitive ability was above 110 and those above 130 were classed as gifted. Yvonne (102) was classed as having high cognitive ability, with Becky (122) as the highest in this survey year group, but eight points away from being classed as gifted. Students scoring 80-89 were below average but would be seen to be able to cope within a mainstream classroom without support while those in the borderline range of 70-79 would struggle, and below 70 in the extremely low grouping would need considerable support in order to be able to work within a mainstream classroom. Within this survey group two students were in the below average group with one student lying at the top end of the borderline category with a score of 79.

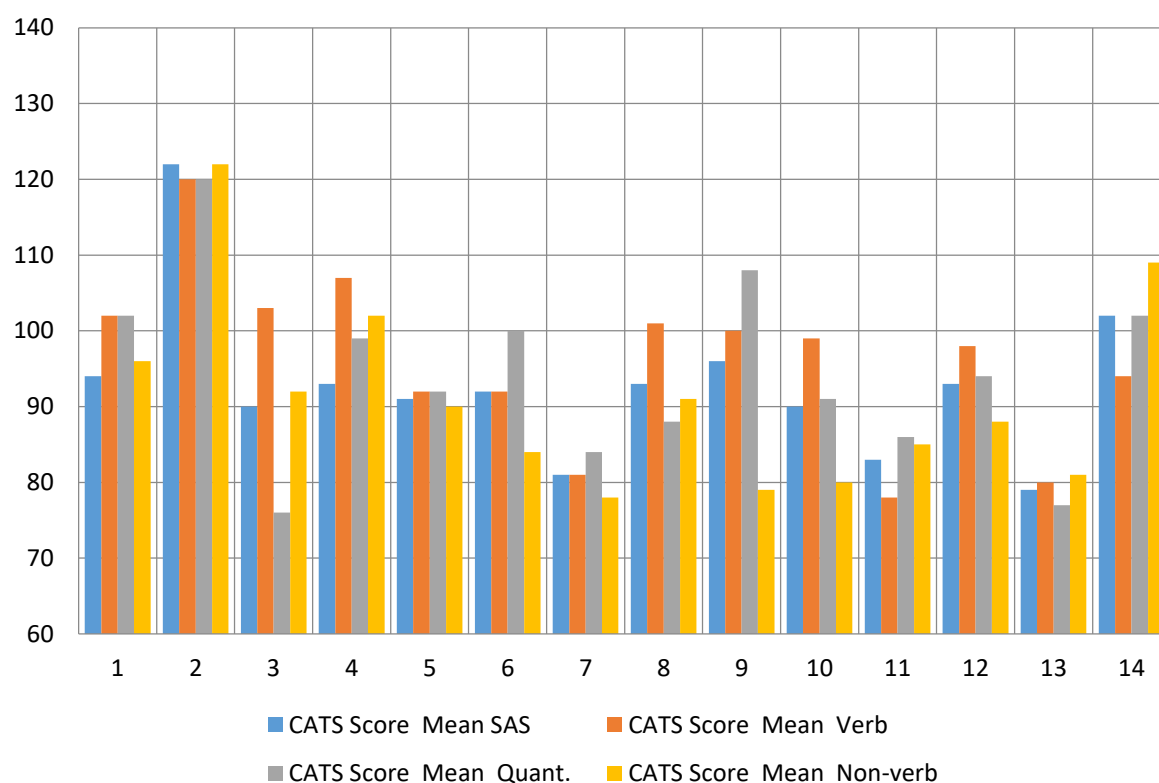
Table 5.10: Academic profile of the students in the research (*Highlighted yellow students are the high achieving group*)

Name	Key stage 1 results	Keys stage 2 results	key stage 3 results	CATS Score Mean SAS	CATS Score Mean Verb	CATS Score Mean Quant.	CATS Score Mean Non-verb	Jesson ratings	Key stage 4 results
Ashlee	2a, 2b, 2a	4a,4a, 4a,	6a,6b,6a	94	102	102	96	above	8xA, 2xB
Becky	2a,3,3	5b,5a,5b	6c,6a,6c	122	120	120	122	high	3xA*, 4xA, 3xB
Billy	2a,2a,3	5c,5c,5b	5a,5b,5c	90	103	76	92	high	1xA, 1xB,7xC
Grace	2a,2a,3	5,5,5	6a,6a,7a	93	107	99	102	high	8xA*, 2xA
Leanne	2a,2b,2a	5,4b,4c	5c,5B,5B	91	92	92	90	above	4xA*,1xA,5xB, 1xC
Louise	2a,2a,3	5,4a,5	6c,5b,6a	92	92	100	84	high	3xA,4xB,2xC
Luke	B,B,N	B,3c,3b	4c,4c,4c	81	81	84	78	below	1xD,6xF
Mark	2b,2b,2b	4a,4b,4c	5a,5b,5c	93	101	88	91	above	5xA,2xB, 2xC
Ricky	2b,2b,2b	4c,4c,4b	5b,5c,5b	96	100	108	79	above	3xA*,5xA,2xB
Sam	2a,2c,2b	4a,4c,4c	5a,4a,5c	90	99	91	80	above	3xA*, 7xB, 1xC
Scott	2b,2c,2a	4c,4b,4b	5c,4b,5b	83	78	86	85	above	2xB, 4xC, 2xD, 2xE
Sue	3,2c,2b	5,4c,4a	5c,5a,5b	93	98	94	88	above	1xB,7xC,1xD,1 xF
Tony	2c,2b,2a	4c,3b,4c	4c,4a,4b	79	80	77	81	average	10xC, 2x F
Yvonne	2b,2a,2a	5,4a,5	6a,5a,6b	102	94	102	109	high	1xA*, 5xA, 2xB,2xC

The CATs groups differ from those recorded in the Jesson grouping (Based on key stage 2 results). The two methods measure different aspects of the academic spectrum, CATs measuring general cognitive ability while SATs measuring taught knowledge.

The three strands of the CATs showed how students had strengths in different verbal, quantitative or non-verbal abilities. The majority of the students had a 'spikey' CATs profile. Dipping scores most frequently found within the quantitative ability and non-verbal ability. Only two students had flat profiles and these were students from different CATs ability groups: one high ability student, and one average. Both these students achieved 5 A*-A grades at GCSE. The presence of high discrepancies in an ability profile are more frequent in the most able students (Lohman, Gambrell & Lakin, 2008) and provide an indication of potential academic achievement.

Figure: 5.2 - CATs profiles for the survey students



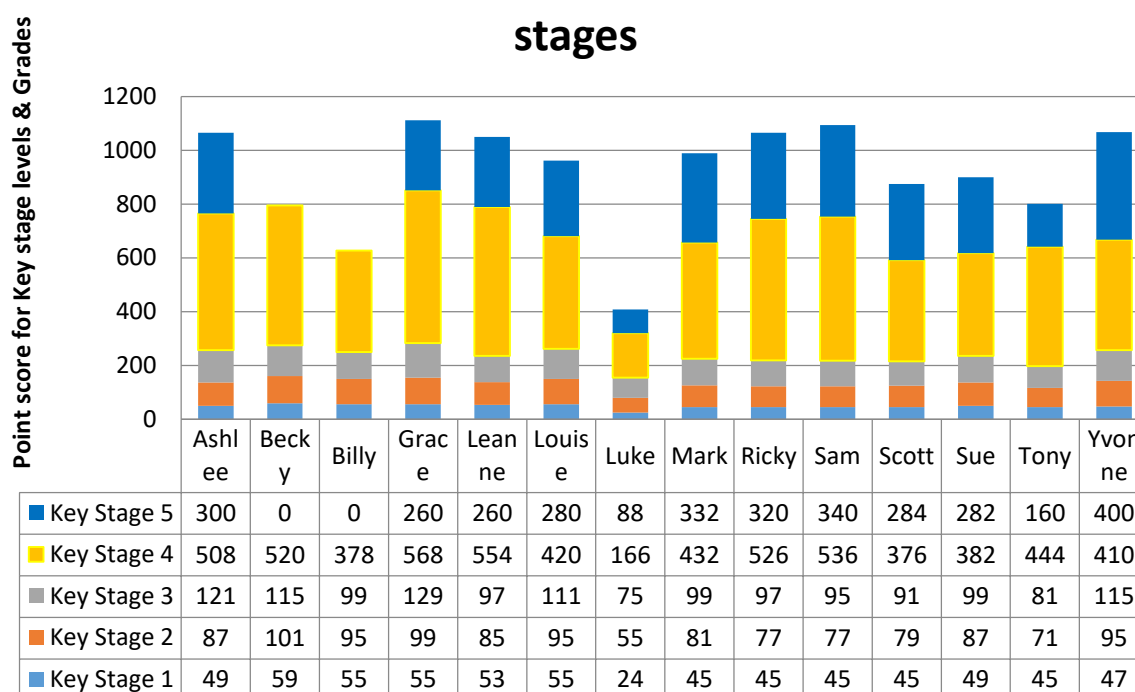
The key stage 1, 2 and 3 SATs results showed no overall patterns. At key stage 1 students achieved in line with the national average score of 2b across the subjects. Luke did not perform in line with the other students, and Tony who had lower CATs scores performed much higher than Luke. Luke however, was diagnosed as dyslexic when he moved to secondary school. At the end of key stage 2 half of the students clustered around the average 4b score, and equated to a Jesson ranking of above average and a 84% chance of gaining 5A*-C grades at the end of key stage 4. Five students achieved a high Jesson¹ rating giving them a 96% chance of gaining 5A*-C GCSEs. There was a drop in the rate of progress recorded between key stage 2 and 3 for 3 of the students (Billy, Sue and Tony). The majority (10) of the group had made one level of progress and only one student made two levels of progress. Overall the students had underperformed in line with the government's expectation of two or three levels of progress. A more rapid rate of progress occurred throughout key stage 4.

The GCSE results were divided. The first group achieved five or more A*-A grade GCSEs: Grace gained 10, Ashlee and Ricky gained 8, Becky achieved 7, Yvonne 6 and Mark and Yvonne gained 5. The government measure for high level attainment is 3A*-A grades, with

¹ These rankings, designed by David Jesson (2006) with The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, grouped students in relation to their Key stage 2 results as a prediction of how they should achieve at GCSE.

5A*-A grades being seen as exceptional attainment. There are similarities between progress made at the end of key stage 3, higher CATs and the higher GCSE results. Grace, Ashlee, Becky and Yvonne achieved level 6 for their key stage 3 results, and apart from Ashlee had CATs scores in the high ability category. Leanne, Mark and Ricky achieved the lower key stage 3 grade of level 5 and had a slightly lower CAT score between 96-91. Mark and Leanne achieved five grades, but Ricky passed eight at this grade achieving higher final levels than Becky and Yvonne even though his cognitive ability was only 96 compared to their higher scores of 102 and 122. Overall student progress showed to be uneven and not equal to cognitive ability. As the case stories show academic success is not an isolated event but reacts to the environmental situation into which it is placed.

Fig 5.3 Comparing progress across the Key stages



The achievement at the end of key stage 4 (age 16) ranked against the Mean Standard Age Score (SAS)² showed a correlation between those students who were ranked in the top seven linked to those who achieved the higher overall GCSE points score. Students who started their academic journey with higher cognitive ability scores did achieve better overall GCSE results than those with lower ability. The case however is not uniform, as the ranking does not stay consistent; three of the students within the top five CATs scores (Becky, Yvonne and Sue)

² Cognitive ability test results – Average score = 89-111, above average 112-127, very high ability = 128-150, below average = 73-88 and very low ability = 50-72.

also have the highest negative rankings. The reverse pattern was also observed with the student with the lowest CATs score (Tony) achieving the highest positive ranking move, and achieving five places above others with CATs scores up to 14 points ahead of him. Although the sample was small this difference cannot be ignored. The success of students within the current educational world in England is influenced by a wide variety of factors and cognitive ability is only one aspect and should not be judged as the prominent factor. Current government measures of school success rely heavily on the measures of school progress ranked against student academic potential, using Cognitive Ability Tests and Standard Assessment Tests; these produce a percentage score of the probability of a school achieving a projected level of attainment. The removal of value added measures has meant that contextual factors at work within a school environment are no longer considered, leaving inspection measures purely based on non-contextualised data.

Name	SAS	Rank	GCSE	Rank	Difference in rankings
Ashlee	94	4	508	6	minus 2
Becky	122	1	520	5	minus 4
Billy	90	10	378	12	minus 2
Grace	93	5	568	1	plus 4
Leanne	91	9	554	2	plus 7
Louise	92	8	420	10	minus 2
Luke	81	13	166	14	minus 1
Mark	93	5	432	8	minus 3
Ricky	96	3	526	4	minus 1
Sam	90	10	536	3	plus 7
Scott	83	12	376	13	minus 1
Sue	93	5	382	11	minus 6
Tony	79	14	422	9	plus 5
Yvonne	102	2	490	7	minus 5

Table 5.11: Comparison of rank orders of CATs SAS and GCSE results

The critical measure used within the English education system to assess academic success of particular groups of students and school improvement over time has been the benchmark of five GCSEs grade A*-C including English and mathematics. In 2016 this system was replaced by the Progress 8 measure which places a value on a student's progress against eight of their GCSE grades including English and mathematics. These measures place the focus on how a student performs at the age of 16 against previous expected progress. What is significant about all aspects of the progress pattern observed in this data is that from the academic profiles of these students, the pattern of progress has not followed the previously accepted progress route from nursery to secondary. A common factor amongst this data is the late emergence of academic success, significantly at key stage 4.

Ten or the fourteen students at the end of the research period had a place on a university degree course. Grace had deferred her place for a year to gain work experience in a hospital before starting her degree. Of the remaining four students, Billy (who had repeated year 12) was in the process of applying to go to university, Louise had a job with a major retail chain, Tony was looking for an apprenticeship in engineering and Becky was working part-time and caring for her mother.

Four of the students entered top universities which were not local to their home area. Yvonne, Sam, Mark and Ricky achieved the highest UCAS points from key stage 5 enabling them to apply and to be accepted into these establishments. Mark and Ricky both had older siblings who had entered university before them. They both applied for higher achieving universities than their siblings had attended. The element of competition was openly voiced by Ricky. Whether there was a competitive element with his older sister, Mark did not mention, but this may have been a motivating factor.

Mark, Ricky and Sam all had average CATs and SATs results below the age of 11 signalling that academic achievement does not need to be seen at an early age, although this does not rule out that the factors which finally supported the achievement were already in place and active from an early age.

Student	University
Mark	Exeter
Ricky	Durham
Yvonne	Nottingham
Sam	Leicester
Grace	Queen Mary's London
Sue	Aberystwyth
Ashlee	Gloucester
Scott	Gloucester
Leanne	Birmingham City
Luke	Leeds

Table 5.12: Table showing the university destinations

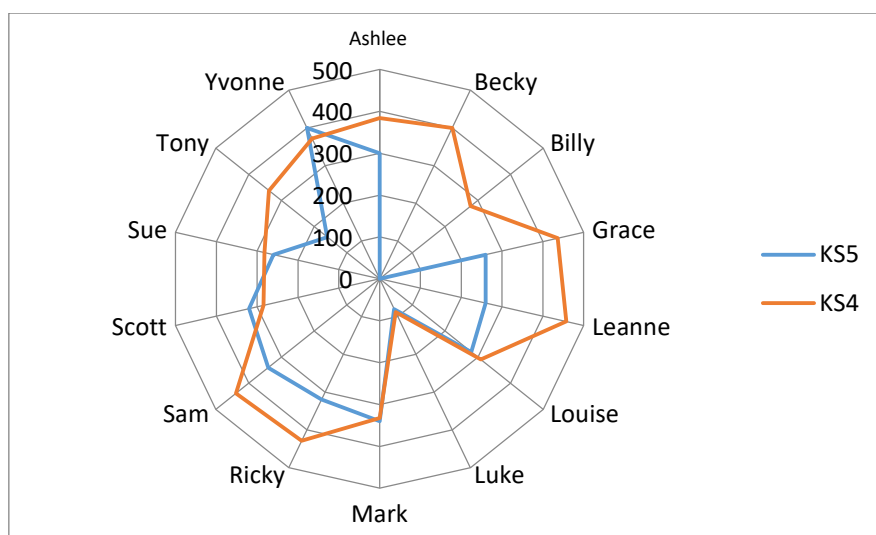


Figure 5.4: A rose diagram comparing point score of GCSEs with the UCAS point score for A Levels/Level 3 BTECs

Yvonne and Scott performed at a higher level of attainment at key stage 5 than at key stage 4. Both selected a curriculum which matched their work place desires, Yvonne followed a business based education and Scott followed the football scholarship. Sue, Mark and Luke performed at a similar level between their GCSEs and A-level courses. A slight underperformance occurred between these two key stages for Louise, Ricky, Sam and Ashlee. While for Leanne, Grace, Becky and Tony, the higher level of attainment they achieved at key stage 4 was not sustained into key stage 5. The reasons for the underachievement for Leanne, Grace and Tony may reflect the strength of some of the foundation practices which were missing throughout their childhood, practices of language development, reading and wider world experiences. The curriculum at key stage 4 can to a degree be learnt and examination answering drill practiced in order to pass these examinations. At key stage 5 the examinations test critical analysis, higher level evaluation and application of subject knowledge. A student requires the ability to draw together and discuss new ideas with fluency and creativity at key stage 5 which were not so essential to achieve the top grades at key stage 4. To achieve the top grades at key stage 5 these skills need time to be embedded and students need to be able to generalise their learning when faced with new academic challenges.

Concluding points

Although the structural profiles of the students showed a degree of similarity, the practices and dispositions were more varied, especially practices that previous research had shown to have impact upon educational success.

A supportive family, could be argued, as having a positive impact upon student aspirations and achievement. Five out of the seven high achievers group stated that a family member had a major impact upon their academic success, but only three of the five were able to complete

homework at home; the correlation was weak. Having a home which was suitable to study in did not equate to whether or not their family was supportive of their study. The students found study easier when they lived in a home where parents would play an active part in their homework but where a parent was not available, due to work commitments or other family commitments, this did not appear to stop the overall support of the family towards homework completion.

Changing aspirations was one consistent factor amongst the research group. In year 9 only four out of the fourteen students wished to go to university, by year 12 only one student did not wish to attend university. The role of the school in changing aspirations was a dominating factor here.

Chapter 6: The conclusion

This research raises some fundamental questions about conventional thinking related to white working class academic success and failure. The national pattern of educational achievement showed that the majority of white working class students achieved very low examination results, only 16% achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics (Ofsted 2012). It was this 16% that drew interest. At the research school every year, a few students from the same estate as the other students, living in similar levels of poverty, with similar social, economic and cultural capital had broken this pattern and achieved in line with the highest achieving students nationally at the end of key stage 4, with five or more A*-A grade GCSEs. These students had somehow overcome the barriers experienced by the majority of white working class children, and achieved a higher level of academic success within the education system. This research aimed to identify the factors that led to this. The percentage of high achieving students in the research school was in line with the national statistics; in 2007 3.8% of students from highly deprived areas were high achievers.

Using the methodology of realism the research work focused on particular aspects of the students' lives but with an acknowledgement that all that was observed is not the sum total of all factors at play. The capital of each individual student had an influence upon their academic journey since birth, shaping practices and dispositions but this is hard to observe, while forming the framework within which all is situated.

The institutions of the education system and recent government educational policy remain culturally at odds with the working class (Marshall 2103, Brown 2015). The students within the research group showed that their school had a major influence upon their 'changed course' resulting in greater social mobility, but this was at a cost. Many students from families in poverty traditionally, had at best, ambiguous relationships with teachers (Ridge, 2006; Brown, 2015). It was observed that students who created positive relationships with their teachers and communicated better with them, performed better academically due to higher self-esteem/aspirations and an awareness of the need for greater cultural capital (in the form of educational qualifications). There was a critical tipping point for these students, when they had developed enough self-esteem they engaged with the educational life of the school leading to educational success. This engagement was the gateway forward, influencing further factors of educational success to come into play, leading to a changed habitus. These students' academic profiles and patterns of progress also challenged those conventionally accepted as being typical of high achieving students. The pattern of progress appeared to be linked closely with their formation of relationships within the school environment especially with like-minded students and their teachers. These students had become aware that if they had different life

experiences their lives would change, however this change moved them away from their family's habitus. The feeling expressed by a number of the students (Mark, Ricky, Grace, Yvonne, Leanne, Sam, and Sue) was that they wished to 'escape' from the estate to improve their life chances, while still having close relationships with their family. The question arising from the research is whether students have to accumulate capital and change their habitus to become socially mobile and move beyond their family roots, as Bourdieusian theory (1984) would suggest, or whether they can achieve and move on without having accumulated the capital first.

Questioning Bourdieu and cultural capital as an explanatory theory

The analysis in this research has relied on Bourdieu's notions of capital, fields and the notion of habitus. While they may be the basis for good explanations of class difference, when reflecting on the data in this study it became apparent that some qualifications to his theory may be needed. The Bourdieusian premise that cultural capital divides society and works to protect the gap between the classes was observed; the research showed the struggle and the students' vulnerability as they achieved academic success (Kupfer, 2014). However, they achieved this success without possessing the rich cultural capital which we might expect of the middle classes. Their achievements allowed them access into university, and for a few access to certain universities (Exeter, Durham, Nottingham and Leicester) which are less familiar to the working class student than the more newly formed 'local' universities (Gloucester and Birmingham City). Reay, Crozier and Clayton (2009) have argued that working class students in Britain's elite universities can be 'Strangers in Paradise'. Academically successful working class students in their comprehensive schools were 'fish out of water' and they argued feel more like 'fish in water' within the university.

This research suggests that within certain environments working class students can take on board enough of the characteristics of the middle class without having accumulated the broader cultural capital which is so central to Bourdieu's theory. They did not visit museums or have access to the kinds of reading that middle class professional parents may offer their children. The students in this study may have had parents with whom they talked and they may have been read to when young but these are very different experiences to those described by Bourdieu. These students 'slip in amongst' the middle class without the benefit of similar capital. Yet they did have experience of family members who had gone to university and had opted for a middle class lifestyle as a consequence. In this sense they had emerging middle class role models.

This research raises a question as to how helpful Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is when seeking to explain working class educational success. Clearly, cultural capital may explain the fate of the majority of working class students but not those in this study.

The research finds similar conclusions to the studies of Jackson and Marsden (1962), Reay (2001), and Kupfer (2015). All these studies explored the reasons common in working class families that brought about academic success. These former studies like this research did not find common enabling factors but together provide catalysts for change.

Those particularly related to this research are:

1. The presence of middle class family member or the 'non actualisation of habitus'. By combining the explanation of Jackson and Marsden (1962) with that of Bourdieu (1991) and Kupfer (2015) there is a change in the meaning or interpretation of life events due to different experiences, brought about by trigger events of the practices of one parent dominating a small aspect of the child's educational experience.

Students within this category are: Grace (Cousin at university training to be a doctor); and Billy (mother retrained to become a teacher).

2. Conscious or unconscious rejection of the social milieu of origin. Members of the child's family see how they are trapped by their lack of education and motivate family members to engage with their academic studies. The 'trapped' family member acted as a role model for others. Reay (2001) stated that this catalyst was characterised by the negotiation of a difficult balance between investing in a new and improved identity and maintaining a coherent self, where parents encouraged their children through their actions and words. This catalyst for change dominated the fourteen stories in this study.

Students within this category are: Mark (influenced by parents and sister); Ashlee (influenced by her mother); Yvonne (aware of difficult life lived by her parents); Leanne (influenced by her sister); Ricky and Grace (aware of the world beyond through new experiences); Billy (influenced by his mother); Sam (influenced by how hard his parents worked and his peers who seemed to do little with their lives); and Luke (influenced by his mother).

3. Pedagogic effort (Kupfer 2015) is important in this study as it helps to explain how students who did not start with a high academic profile have through critical moments achieved academic success in their teenage years. Combined with this catalyst I would add the element of competition especially for the males in the study. Success in school provided a personal belief that success could be achievable and this bred further success, at times aided by peer or sibling competition.

Students within this category are: Grace (experienced critical moments throughout her early childhood and teenage years); Mark, Grace, Ricky, Sam, Ashlee and Sue (driven by competition within the family or from peers); Leanne, Sue, Scott, Billy, Tony and Luke (by seeing success were driven on to achieve more).

4. Seeking truth in Higher education, (Kupfer, 2015) this catalyst worked in conjunction with the pedagogic effort. Once success was achieved and the opening to higher education seemed possible students were motivated to study to gain new insights into the world. Having the awareness that education at a higher level would provide them a different view of the world provided them with a new sense of security in life and the motivation to continue with their education.

Students within this category are: Mark, Grace, Ricky, Ashlee, Leanne, Sam, Luke, Sue, and Scott (motivated by family members and /or teachers that they could go to university).

These catalysts for change draw together the initial research questions, providing a framework for the factors to sit within. They outline how change can take place over time. The role of the school and the family are complex and the interplay between the catalysts for change and the situations within the home and school are not easy to isolate. It is enough to say that when factors collide the catalyst for social mobility is more likely to take root.

Concluding reflections on the research questions.

1. What are the critical factors within the spheres of structures, practices and dispositions that enabled educational success?

a. Structures

The research established that the students had similar social and economic circumstances. For the fourteen students in this study, home ownership, occupational status, household income, and the presence of their local extended family all were broadly similar. The majority lived in rented accommodation, in a household of mainly manual or semi-skilled workers in low paid jobs, and had extended family living locally. There were small differences between the highest achievers and lower achiever groups, but not significant enough to show any relevance. All students were from families with low incomes and this factor traditionally had a negative effect upon academic success.

Jackson & Marsden (1962) argued that, within some of the families they studied, one parent was part of the 'sunken middle class' having married into the working class from the middle class and brought with them cultural capital (change catalyst 1 above). Although all students and parents declared themselves as working class, Grace, and Billy showed some evidence

of additional cultural capital and possible 'sunkeness'. Grace spoke of her cousin who was training to be a doctor, who had greatly inspired her to work harder and achieve more. Billy's mother spoke of her father who had influenced her to read and saw the importance of education while her mother fostered an opposite view. Billy's mother had retrained and studied to become a teacher. It is not clear whether there is the presence of a 'sunken middle class' parent but signposts toward the possibility that there was greater cultural capital present in the past family history which may have influenced the views and values held within the family, even though economic resources may not have allowed these values to be played out fully.

Only two factors, order of sibling and marital status showed any significant difference between the higher achieving student and the lower achieving student groups. Being the youngest child where the older brother or sister had gone off to university or actively supported the younger sibling to attend university was an influencing factor (change catalyst 4 above). The older sibling, while at university had become part of a new social grouping, with social characteristics which equated to middle class rather than working class ones. The access to this new social group had, therefore, extended the social capital for that family. This change within the family also created through the element of sibling rivalry a greater self-expectation of the younger sibling to follow, leading to a change in the habitus of the family. The close relationships within the families of Mark, Scott, Ricky and Leanne established the right setting for enriched social relationships. The older sibling extended the family sphere into a new setting and created new social links. This enrichment of capital provided access to new skills and introduced a new outlook on life. The new situation provided an element of competition between the siblings. The younger child felt they needed to achieve more or at least achieve equally to the older sibling (Mark and Ricky), providing motivation through positive competition.

In the higher achievers group the two students who were the oldest child in their family also had key people who they either wished to emulate or were in fierce competition with. Ashlee wished to emulate the success her uncle had. Grace had not been brought up by her parents like her younger brother and continually felt she lived in the shadow of her brother. In order to gain the approval of her father she was highly motivated to achieve, continually measuring herself against her perception of what her younger brother would achieve.

The second structural factor was the stability within the home. One measure used was marital status. Those students who had been brought up in a household where their parents were married or birth parents lived as a married couple in a long term relationship dominated the higher achievers group. As has been previously noted this finding is supported by some research (Lauder, Kounali, Robinson and Goldstein, 2010) and Carnoy, (2000).

b. Practices – (i). family/home focused

There were four key practices which stood out for the high achievers group: school attendance, reading for pleasure, parents having read to their child as they grew up, and the family having experiences beyond the home/school environment.

These practices (regular school attendance, parental reading practices leading to personal reading and wider world experiences) are similar to those we expect to be found within a middle class family. What was apparent within the fourteen families was a presence of these practices having been embraced. It is difficult to be totally sure of the reason for the addition of these practices into the family. However, the parents did express (Sam's, Ashlee's, Mark's and Billy's) that they wanted something better for their children than they had had or other children in the neighbourhood generally experienced. These parents believed that 'this was what good parents did' but were not fully aware who had suggested they would benefit their children. With these small pockets of practice having been introduced into family life for some of the students, an element of drawing closer to elements of the culture of the school had developed. The families believed that by carrying out these practices they were providing the best opportunities for their children, even though this required them to have different spending patterns or life styles from those that were traditional to the local community. Supporting the students through secondary education and enabling them to enter university appeared to be the critical mechanism which promoted social mobility for these students. From the research carried out with the fourteen students a conclusion was drawn that the practices in themselves do not provide actual capital but a mechanism to enable capital accumulation at a later point in the student's life once they have established themselves through their work place and income, in a higher socio-economic grouping. If the practices brought immediate capital gain and access to a new habitus, each of the student's lives would have been similar and any vulnerability to academic success would not have existed. Becky's story showed that family events could easily create instability in the 'academic success' story as her transition from having the highest profile of grades throughout key stage 2,3 and 4 did not lead to academic achievement at key stage 5. Although this research does not follow the life story of each student beyond key stage 5, it is fully acknowledged that success even at university does not necessarily still bring guaranteed social mobility or class change.

c. Practices – (ii). School focused

For each individual student there were critical events which had a positive impact upon their academic progress. The majority of these events were focused around school based activities, the curriculum or the staff. A number of the students spoke of how the school site provided for them a safe environment which was available beyond the normal school day. Grace spoke of

the school as her second home and acknowledged that she spent more time in school than at home. Leanne, Ricky and Grace enjoyed the ability to work together after school in the library or with staff members. Having the environment which provided the means to study while also promoting a strong message through the new facilities offered by the building showed the students that they did matter and had worth supporting an attitude that change was possible.

The school clubs acted as catalysts for change moments. Mark's mother spoke about how the family valued the school trips and for her son to visit places they as a family would not be able to afford to do. The family saved to send Mark on two school trips which he valued and provided him with a 'taste' of the world beyond the estate driving a hunger to experience more in his life than that which had been available to his parents. Billy spoke passionately about winning a competition and how this had made him have a belief in himself for the first time that he could achieve. The drive to enter the competition had come from the school hobbies club. The hobbies club had provided him with a better connection with his school life and fostered a competitive spirit between a number of students who were not particularly interested in sports but had a passion for computer gaming.

The involvement of school sports clubs and teams were critical to Scott, Mark and Ricky. Each spoke both of the enjoyment and competitiveness of the team sport while stressing the important relationship there had been with their coach or Physical Education (PE) teacher. Ricky had been inspired to attend the school due to the relationship he had built with a teacher during the year 6 induction programme. The PE teacher stressed the importance of a good education to complement their sports skills. Scott mentioned how participation in the football scholarship was determined by having a good behaviour and attendance record in school. In order to continue on to the 16-19 football scholarship, Scott had to achieve English and mathematics GCSE at grade C or above and this had motivated him to align his academic work with his football achievement. The football scholarship had changed the course of progression for Scott. By the time Scott was in year 9 he had a string of exclusions and was on a final warning of permanent exclusion. Entry onto the new football scholarship course was a critical moment for Scott who quickly engaged with the course and progressed onto the 16-19 scholarship and secured a place at a local university sports degree course.

The importance of holistic education for Luke, Yvonne, Tony and Sue fostered an understanding of the importance of education in its widest form enabling them to see the importance of formal learning in the classroom situation. A new teacher to the school provided a critical moment for Sue. The teacher had previously worked for the Holocaust Educational Trust and invited a holocaust survivor into school. This had a major impact on Sue who decided to study history at university and work in this field of study in later life. Previously

unaware of the real lives behind these events, the visit had brought a new dimension into her world, introducing her to aspects of life to which she had never been subjected and vastly beyond those talked about by her family and neighbourhood community. The visit provided Sue with the impetus to change the course of her life traditionally observed by members of her family. For Tony a change to his academic curriculum, the introduction of the Engineering diploma, (an examination course which has now disappeared from the national curriculum offer) was the critical point which signalled a change to his academic success. This course was heavily linked to the specialism of the new academy and its industrial sponsor. In the early stage of academy creation the new academies had a subject specialism and a local business sponsor, this practice has also disappeared from the academy programme now. Tony was keen to follow his father's trade and this course with the links to the local industrial partner provided the motivation he required. Although not achieving the highest academic grades his progression pathway moved from a very average 27 points at the end of key stage 1 to 440 points, well above the national average (351.7 for all pupils and 330.7 for boys, DFE, 2014), at the end of key stage 4.

Yvonne and Becky were able to combine vocational courses with academic GCSEs enabling them both to take courses with a business bias. For Yvonne taking a course in business was moving away sharply from the manual work that her parents followed. Yvonne also knew that taking courses that showed her a new pathway as well as having a strong foundation in some academic courses would provide her with a foretaste of the business world while not confining her to a purely vocational route. She was charting a new exploration into a world alien to her family and needed the school courses to provide some form of bridge however tentative. Her key stage 4 and 5 curriculums provided her with both the study and experiences to access a top university course and make the transition.

Luke had had a very slow start to his academic career, but the actions of the SENCo and the dedication of his support teachers, his mother and his engagement with the reading programme changed his course significantly. The rapid reading progression however came a little too late to allow him to fully achieve in key stage 4. The curriculum offer and the belief the school had in their support systems allowed Luke to continue with a level 3 BTEC course in Performing Arts. This course opened a new area of the curriculum to him and one he went on to study at university initially on a foundation degree. Luke spoke about how his friends had also wished to take the same course but without the support from their families they had not taken up their places at university. Luke had feared that he would become 'stuck' in the local labour market. He had seen many of his friends do little with their lives. They were in local low paid jobs, where the only highlight of their week appeared to be Friday night at the local pub. This fear was also shared by Sam.

d. Dispositions

All of the students in the research were able to point to one or more persons in their life who influenced their academic achievement. This one person provided a route to acquire the practices and dispositions which enabled educational capital accumulation; however, although that person might have been perceived as the role model, frequently others not directly accredited were present who offered the form of capital the student required. It was also observed that the parent who was encouraging the student, was not actually the direct role model, but an encourager who had experienced the harshness of life and was just mimicking the middle class' educational values to provide 'escape' for their own children. The majority of the high achieving group (6/7) selected a member of their family who had encouraged and inspired them, creating greater self-worth and higher personal expectation. Aspirations, attitudes and values are quoted by successive government ministers as being central to explaining educational outcomes, especially when related to levels of deprivation (Cabinet Office, 2008.2009, 2011). Aspirations, attitudes and values are not commodities that you can purchase, so stating that schools need to increase student attainment by creating higher aspirations as though they are tangible items is nonsensical. In a recent paper Baker, et al (2014) stated, that generalised policy statements related to culture neglected the identity of the individual and over simplified the group aspects of culture. The policies took no account of changing practices and ignored any power struggle which favoured certain cultural practices; viewing others as deviant and 'inferior'. Individuals from a working class background can have 'changed' cultural identities which are not so alienated from the educational ethos of some schools, and wish to participate fully in education, go into higher education and change their future identities. The students in this research showed that through their relationships with key people and participating in specific programmes or events their personal aspirations could be changed, and developed to include a desire to achieve in school and move on to university. Their cultural capital was enhanced due to the relationships and their participation in new activities. Having a role model who guided the students to embrace new cultural capital via the education system helped assist this process. Recent governments (coalition party and the Conservative Party) have argued that the 'lack of aspirations by the working class' is a reason for low academic achievement, blaming the working class and maintaining the cultural divide with the middle class. However, draining resources from schools which have funded programmes like 'Aim Higher', and the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has restricted the development of new experiences or 'guides' and further restricted access to Higher Education opportunities.

In answer to the first research question it appears from the study of the fourteen students that there are a number of critical factors that should be considered in order to aid the academic

success of white working class students in our schools. The development of literacy skills across both the educational sphere and home life of the children seems to have had an impact especially leading to the child becoming an independent learner. The ability for the student to engage with the world 'beyond the estate' and different cultural experiences had a positive influence on their academic achievement. Finally the ability for the student to be able to learn from and to be inspired by a role model was critical in their academic success.

e. The timescale of these critical factors

Feinstein (2003) argued that able students from disadvantaged backgrounds were 'overtaken' in the academic world by less able students from affluent backgrounds between the ages of 5 and 10. His work suggests that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who were achieving reasonably well in primary school, would not see this pattern continue into secondary school. For the research group a reverse pattern has been observed. All students apart from Becky had average or just above average cognitive scores, and average key stage 1 and 2 results; their progress academically had developed throughout their secondary school years especially during key stage 4. Mark, Ricky, Yvonne and Sam who had key stage 1 results of 45 (Mark, Ricky) and 47 (Yvonne) saw their progress accelerate to above 410 points at GCSE (equivalent to eight grade A results) and between 326-400 UCAS points at A-level (equivalent to one A grade and two B grades to three A grade results); grades required for entry into the country's top universities.

The research students' family profiles did not conclusively show that the critical factors previously identified for academic progress (school attendance, parental educational background, early literacy and numeracy skills, and wider learning experiences) were in place for each student during the early learning years. Grace and Louise both showed that their early childhood years had limited opportunities for high levels of parental contact, money for trips and holidays or high parental aspirations. Instead due to lack of money and family instability their early childhood experiences could have been used to explain latter academic failure had that pattern occurred. Both students instead made good progress between age 7 and 16 moving from 55 points to 568 or 420 (Academic Point Score related to key stage 1 and 4) respectively. This progress also coincided with Grace moving back to live with her parents and Louise being adopted and living with her new family. Both families recognised the need to offer their children a better future than they had had or had been able to offer the child in their early years. A similar drive to improve opportunities for their children were spoken about by Ashlee's, Billy's and Luke's mothers.

Changes in the attitudes of the students to have higher aspirations for themselves were seen in year 9 and then again in year 12. In year 9 of the higher achieving students (HAS) only four

said they might like to go to university, but by year 12 all seven were applying or had actively visited universities and would be applying. Of the lower achieving students (LAS) no students in year 9 wished to attend university and by year 12 five were applying. This shift in academic aspiration had been fostered by the school over the years through a number of events. Weekly inspirational quotes from famous people formed the thoughts for the week and focus of the weekly school assemblies. Around the new school building inspirational quotes were displayed alongside large photographs of the school students in various learning activities. Termly the school held a large celebration assembly awarding certificates for academic achievement and progress and school attendance. These celebration assemblies culminated in the yearly prize- giving ceremony to which were invited an inspirational public figure e.g. Olympic medal winners, record breakers, and other local achievers. The climax of the celebration events was the Graduation ceremony which marked the end of key stage 4. This event was inspired by a visit to the Charter schools in the USA. The students and teachers dressed in academic gowns for the presentation of awards and certificates. Within the research group, parents commented on how proud they had felt attending one of these celebration events. Alongside the frequent visits to local universities, the Aim Higher programme of university taster sessions, and the school careers education curriculum, the school promoted university education displaying information about where staff had attended university, displaying photographs, sweatshirts and university scarfs. When students started to gain places at universities the staff profiles were exchanged with the past student profiles and these students were invited back to school to speak with the year 12 students. The constant verbal and non-verbal messages presented to both the students and parents aided the shift in attitude towards attending university.

Although the work of Feinstein (2003) might show a general trend linking socio-economic grouping and academic progression over time for a majority, these students' stories provided evidence to show that this trend can be broken. Feinstein's work should not be seen as an excuse for limiting the opportunities provided for working class students especially those in challenging schools where academic achievement has been limited. Changing beliefs held by students and parents, creating opportunities for the students to be inspired and encouraged while providing realistic mechanisms through suitable curriculums, safe environments and quality daily teaching to deliver these new aspirations does not seem impossible. The journey of change however should not be underestimated; nor should it be seen as a purely educational issue as these changes demand that there is a greater spreading of cultural capital which will lead to future accumulation of economic capital and social mobility through the working class into the lower middle class.

2. What part does the school play in contrast to family life in working class students' academic success?

The important role that the family has played in the success of all the students was well voiced by them. However, being able to be detached from your cultural environment and to take an objective appraisal of the factors that had major influence upon academic success is difficult for a young person who has great awareness of the sacrifices parents or extended family members may have made for them.

The family for all of the students in this research is believed to have played a critical role in affecting change and creating academic success. However this belief is set within a cultural working class framework which stresses the importance of the family and its close network. Acknowledgement by the students of the role of the family was likely to dominate in their perception of events.

The rivalry created between siblings, the tendency to seek acceptance and approval of ones parents, alongside the internal struggle against the perceived injustice of a family's circumstances have provided emotional drivers for the students. The structural situation of the family, its practices and dispositions don't only provide positive influences but are, it could be argued, what they are fighting against in order to see academic success. Substituting traditional working class practices within the home for more 'middle class' ones has caused the cycle to change rather than follow its previous rotation.

The school provided a stable environment into which a variety of other features were laid. The school's role was to act as a catalysis for that change, setting into motion a wide variety of stimuli which enhanced the overall experience for the individual at their point of change. The significant factors were:

- a) providing a voice of affirmation for the parents and students; developing a 'can do' ethos where although the school had been through difficult times (like the families locally) the school was able to change this and look positively to the future thus allowing the students to take on a similar attitude. (The school had been declared by national papers as the worst school in the country and placed in special measures. Four years later it was out of special measures, located in a new building and developing a new positive reputation.)

Students influenced particular by this factor are: Ricky (his parents were keen for changes occurring in the school at enrolment), Scott (benefited from the new outlook and network of the school with the futsal programme), Tony (as the school became an academy, it was linked with a local sponsor and offered an engineering diploma).

- b) to provide a wide 'extra-curricular programme'; teachers who showed they cared and demanded the very best for the individual;

Students influenced particular by this factor are: Billy (hobbies club), Leanne, Ricky and Grace (School's extended hours and study space provision), Luke (performing arts clubs), Sue (holocaust exhibition and visitor to school), Mark and Scott (school trips and sports clubs).

- c) a curriculum which was varied and suited the students culturally as well as challenging their cultural capital;

Students influenced particular by this factor are: Billy and Luke (SEN provision), Tony, Yvonne, Becky, Scott (specialist diplomas in Engineering, Business, and Sport).

- d) in partnership with the parents, working with them to support their children.

Students influenced particular by this factor are: all students included, with particular reference to Leanne's parents who had not engaged previously with the school but as Leanne started to have academic success they renewed this partnership.

The critical events outlined by the students together with the observed changes that were occurring to the school through the research time cannot be underplayed. When structures and processes change slowly or have become the 'norm' it can be hard to recognise these as influences upon you. The students when questioned directed their thoughts to critical events or the support of individuals rather than seeing the daily educational structure which had surrounded them and changed around them daily, causing their eventual shift in academic success. The changes had not had the same impact upon all students in the year group; the significance of the critical moments and the support and encouragement of the family were vital here, and when these were missing, it was seen that success that had begun, did not come to fruition (e.g. Becky and Luke's friends).

Concluding points

Throughout the study a number of points have been discussed which have been influencing factors aiding success for the white working class student towards academic achievement.

The points raised by this research challenge one aspect of Bourdieu's work which is often taken to involve a rich understanding of cultural capital in order to be successful at school; and in Feinstein's analysis which suggested that educational careers are determined at an early age. The research concludes that the journey of social mobility for a white working class student can be started without the firm acquisition of new cultural capital. A few selected practices and dispositions of the middle classes are fostered within the families as a response to a need to do something better for their children than the parents themselves experienced.

These practices may be further enhanced or started by the school and then incorporated into family life e.g. reading together, visits to local places, or new clubs or hobbies experienced. Changes to some practices and dispositions allow for a snowballing effect to gain momentum, leading to the joining together of a number of factors aiding academic achievement in school. The gaining of qualifications and support to access higher education, places the children on their journey to new accumulation of different cultural capital and to higher income generation. This higher income generation provides access to economic capital which can lead to a change in life style, providing a multiplier effect to capital generation especially cultural and eventually social capital.

The critical factors within the spheres of structures, practices and dispositions enabled educational success to appear to lie within the practices and dispositional spheres mainly. The development of individual reading and study skills fired by an intrinsic personal belief that one can achieve, often aligned to a role model or driven by an inspirational event are the key factors common to the students in the research.

The pattern of academic progress for all but one of the students in the research shows a reverse of that identified by Feinstein. Critical moments in their secondary schooling years appear to have changed the pattern of their progress and students who were of average ability have overcome the general trend seen for many in their schools and achieved academic results which placed them in the highest achievement category nationally and allowed them access to higher education.

The research supports the need for a strong partnership between a child's school and family if they are to achieve academic success. For social mobility to occur and a child to move into a newly formed habitus, the child requires strong support and for all elements of their life to transition together, as their progress forward is highly vulnerable and moving in a juxtaposing direction to their traditional habitus. However, can families and schools together overturn the centuries of class evolution in Britain to allow more than the selected few to progress forward? Or are these 'escapees' actually being allowed to succeed in order to uphold the 'glass protectors' surrounding and separating the classes? Current government policy might suggest this to be the case. A Department for Education spokesman recently said:

"This government is committed to making sure that every child, regardless of background, has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential...We have placed high expectations at the heart of our schools, with a rigorous new curriculum, world class exams and a new system rewarding schools that push every child to achieve their best."

Hannah Richardson 2015 BBC News July 26th

The government emphasis is on a particular curriculum and qualification system which suits their belief system and will allow the few to move forward. With the proposed re-establishment of grammar schools, the new GCSE grading scheme which favours the brighter students placing the previous C grade at the new numbers 4 (low C) and 5 (high C) with the previous A grade at new number 7. The new grade system has been extended to grade 9 making sure the very elite students are provided with plenty of space at the top to single them out from the mass of 'A' grade students that previously the system created. Having new grammar schools, new parent-led Free Schools and the new GCSE examination grades the secondary education system I believe is not an education system for all.

When I embarked on this period of research, I had a strong belief that by studying the lives of those students who were achieving I would find key factors that as a school leader, I could implement into the everyday life of the school. Working in partnership with the families (especially since the school had students of a 3-19 age range) a range of helpful practices could be implemented which would raise the educational achievement of all children. My initial thoughts had been that it was not going to be one key practice, but that students would have a number of factors in their life stories that caused the break with the 'usual' pattern of underachievement. Students who had a combination of the critical factors could have a few 'extras' added, this would tip the balance in their favour and academic success would, therefore, be achieved. The research showed that this was not the case and the reasons that white working class students achieve academic success are far more complex and rooted within their habitus. Creating opportunities for social mobility is highly complex and the answers do not lie within a simple partnership between the school and family. What I have found does not appear to be easily translated across schools as I had hoped. The research has further highlighted to me that the factors that militate against working class students are so overwhelming that those high achieving students studied are exceptions; and these exceptions will continue in the future. I believe the current government policy makes it even harder to close the gap between the classes. Being a leader in this education system and holding a passion for equality for all has been a key reason that I have moved away from being a leader in a mainstream school and now lead a charity-led residential special school; free from some of the government measures that prevent high quality education for those with extreme needs in our society.

It appears that since 2008 when Christine Blower, (Acting General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers) challenged teachers and the government to not allow poverty to be seen as an excuse but acknowledge it as a firm reason for low achievement among many white working class young people; that school values and practices may have shifted but not in a

positive way. Instead government policy appears to promote a culture of 'haves' and 'have nots' as an acceptable norm. The government does not acknowledge poverty as a reason for underachievement instead it lays the issue firmly at the feet of teachers to create magic through the current educational policies and practices to change the fate of individuals. As working class children make academic steps forward so the bar is raised and access to new capital has been placed beyond the reach of the many and secured the future for those already destined for 'success' in its many forms.

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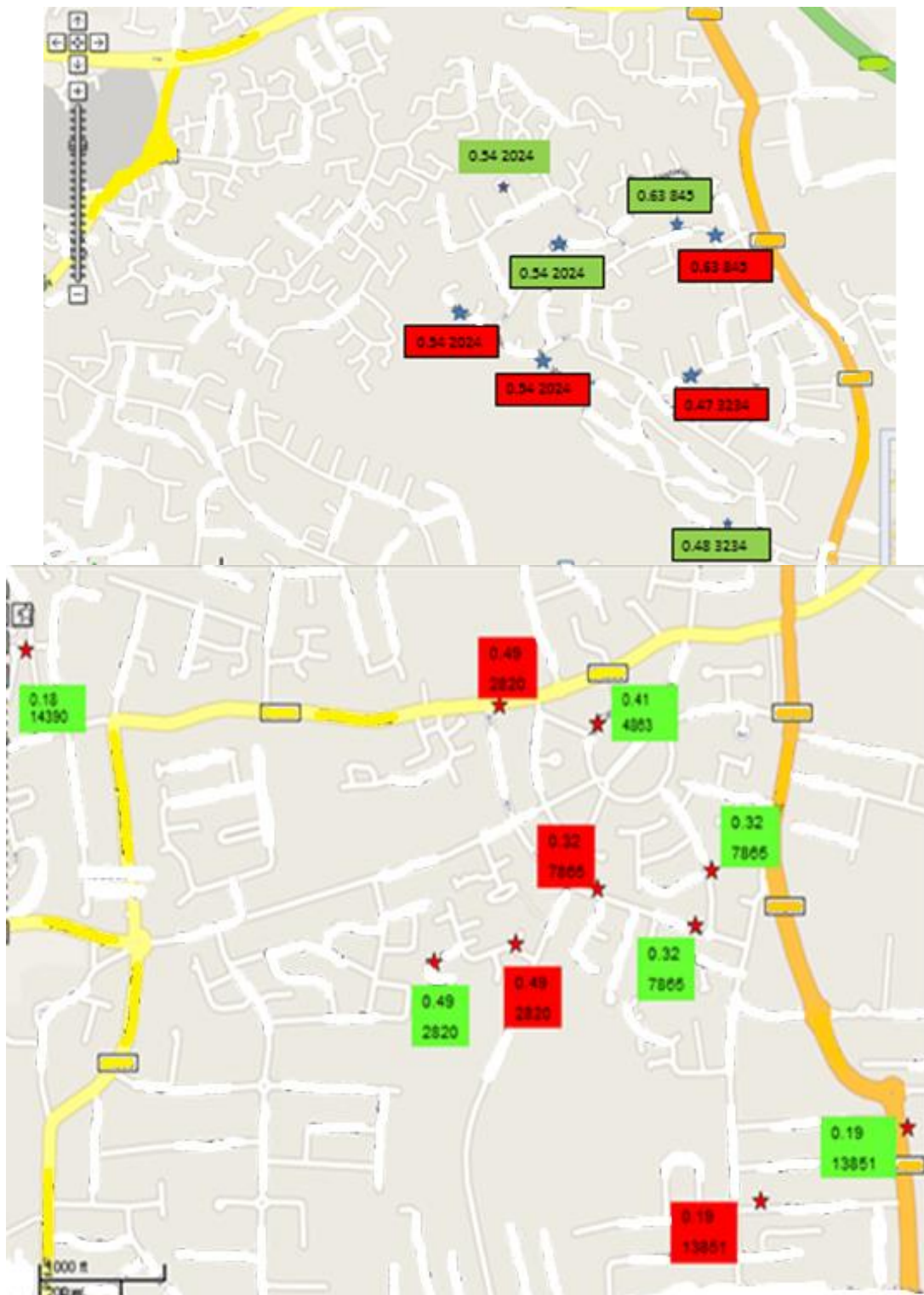
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Appendix one:



Map of the location of the research points – IDACI index shown

(Higher decimals show higher levels of deprivation, rank order 1 is the most deprived. Red squares are the control group – green boxes represent higher achieving students in the year group.)

Appendix 2

Questions for Student interviews

Family

1. How many brothers and sisters do you have? Which number child are you?
2. Do your parents work? What jobs do they do? If they don't how long have they been out of work? What job did they do before?
3. Did your parents pass exams at 16, 19, or 21?

Your education

1. Did you attend a play group or nursery?
2. Why did you and your parents choose for you to attend Headlands/Swindon Academy?
3. Why do you think you have achieved well at school?

Creating success in education

1. Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are?
2. Did your parents read regularly to you as you have grown up?
3. Do you see your parents reading?
4. Do you eat together as a family around a table?
5. If you do is this time a time when you can talk together as a family?
6. Are there other times when you have conversation with your family or other adults?
7. What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday?
8. Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced you to do well in school?
9. What influence did your friends have on your academic success – encourage you to do well, a distraction, give examples.
10. Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to you at school or home which have helped you to do well in education?

Your future

1. What do you expect to do after year 11, year 13?
2. If you wish to go to university – where and what to study?
3. What has made you decide to go to university? Did you parents go? Have friends or members of your family gone to university?
4. When you are earning – where would you like to live – what place? Ideal house.
5. What things would show you that you have achieved success later in life?
6. What more do you think the school could have done to help you or others to achieve in education?
7. Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your education?

Appendix 3

Questions for Parent interviews

Family

1. How many children do you have ages? Do you have a partner?
2. Do you and your partner work? What jobs do you do? If not how long have they been out of work? What job did you/partner do before?
3. Did you pass exams at 16, 19, or 21?

Your education

4. Did your children attend a play group or nursery?
5. Why did you choose for your family to attend Headlands/Swindon Academy?
6. Why do you think you have achieved well at school?

Creating success in education

7. Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are?
8. Did you read regularly to your children as they were growing up?
9. Do they see you reading regularly for your own pleasure/work?
10. Do you eat together as a family around a table?
11. If you do is this time a time when you can talk together as a family?
12. Are there other times when you have conversation with your family or other adults?
13. What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday?
14. Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced your child to do well in school?
15. What influence did their friends have on their academic success – encouragement to do well, a distraction, give examples?
16. Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to them at school or home which have helped you to do well in education?

Their future

17. What have they wanted to do while growing up as a job/career? Do you think you have had any influence on them?
18. Do they wish to go to university – where and what to study? How does this make you feel?
19. What has made them decide to go to university? Did you go? Have friends or members of the family gone to university?
20. What things would show you that they have achieved success later in life?
21. What more do you think the school could have done to help or others to achieve in education?
22. Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your child's education?

Appendix 4 – Data collection summary

Academic History	Date	Method of collection
Key stage 1 results (2002)	Sept 2009	Pupil School Records
Key stage 2 results (2006)	Sept 2009	Pupil School Records
Key stage 3 results	01/06/2010	DFE Exam report
Key stage 4 Results	23/08/2012	SIMS Exam report
Key stage 5 Results	14/08/2014	SIMS Exam report
University/Training	14/08/2014	Student Interview
CATS Score Mean SAS	13/09/2009	Pupil School Records
CATS Score Mean verbal	13/09/2009	Pupil School Records
CATS Score Mean Quantative	13/09/2009	Pupil School Records
CATS Score Mean non-verbal	13/09/2009	Pupil School Records
Jesson Rating (2006)	Sept 2009	Pupil School Records
Socio-economic status		
Mother's occupation	June 2010	First Student Interview
Father's occupation	June 2010	First Student Interview
Acorn Economic Group	Sept 2009	On line Census data
		http://acorn.caci.co.uk
IDACI	Sept 2009	Census on line data set
		http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/
Free School Meals	Sept 2009	Pupil School Records
House Type	June 2010	First Student Interview
Rented or owner occupied	June 2010	First Student Interview
Family Size	June 2010	First Student Interview
Position in siblings	June 2010	First Student Interview
Parental status	June 2010	First Student Interview
local extended family	June 2010	First Student Interview
Educational Influences / Dispositions		
Parental Education	June 2010	First Student Interview
Choice of School	June 2010	First Student Interview
Yr 9 University Aspiration	June 2010	First Student Interview
Yr 12 University Aspiration	Sept 2012	Second Student Interview
Influences on changed decision	Sept 2012	Second Student Interview
Homework	June 2010	First Student Interview
attendance at school	Annually	Pupil School Records
Career aspiration	June 2010	First Student Interview
Family Practices		
Actions of Parents	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
Relationship to staff	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
Relationship to Peers	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
Influence of a single person	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
Parents read to them	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
student reads at home	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews

Books within the home	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
Eat as a family	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
Holidays/ Days out	June 2011-12	Parental and Student Interviews
School Life		
School events/trips	Sept 2009-2014	Observations/field notes
Parent evenings	Sept 2009-2014	Observations/field notes

Appendix 5 – Notes from the interview recordings.

Interview with Mark

How many brothers and sisters do you have? Which number child are you? I have a sister who is older than me. There are four in my immediate family, with mum and dad.

Do your parents work? What jobs do they do? If they don't how long have they been out of work? What job did they do before? Yes they both do. Dad works in the local factory and mum works in the accounts department of a local firm.

Did your parents pass exams at 16, 19, or 21? At 16 they left school having taken some exams.

Your education

Did you attend a play group or nursery? Yes the local one attached to the primary school.

Why did you and your parents choose for you to attend the research school? Dad had gone to this school so I came as well.

Why do you think you have achieved well at school? Mum and Dad want us to do well in school, they make sure we do our homework, and they take us to many different places. I have also played rugby for the school and been in the drama production which has helped me to get along with my teachers. I have a good relationship with them and that really helps.

Creating success in education

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are? Yes we have a good collect of books, too many to count. Plenty of novels and books that my sister and I use with school work. Mum and Dad have books related to all different things.

Did your parents read regularly to you as you have grown up? Yes Dad did. As a Kid, before I started school Dad came home for a lunch break and we would read to me every day, and also in the evening he would read to me before I went to bed.

Do you see your parents reading? Yes they both read for pleasure, especially when they are not working.

Do you eat together as a family around a table? Yes generally all together in the evening as we leave at different times in the morning for work and school.

If you do is this there a time when you can talk together as a family? My sister and I enjoy lively debates with our father. He has strong views on politics. The newspaper is delivered daily and my father offers many comments on many stories which add to these lively

discussions. I like to read the newspaper as well being able to compare my views on story as well as my father's and the writer's. It is also interesting to see how the news differs between the papers and the television news.

Are there other times when you have conversation with your family or other adults? As a close family surrounded by many aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins we meet at least once a week together. We also go on holiday, especially with my two cousins and aunt and uncle. I also go to the rugby with Dad, plenty of discussion after the match with his friends and mine.

What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday? My parents saved greatly so that my sister and I could go on school trips. We both were able to go on residential trips to France and Spain. Many of my friends could not go as it was quite a lot of money, but mum and dad wanted us to go. We did not take many holidays as a family because of this. We have been with our cousins and Dad and I have been camping locally. I also get to go on the school trips to the theatre, I really like these, books and plays we are studying just come alive. I like to join in the school plays and have a few starring roles.

Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced you to do well in school? I think Mum and Dad have but I suppose my sister paved the way for me, she did well at school and then went on to university and I thought that's what I am going to do as well. Mum and Dad want us to do well so we have choice in our life, have a career and plenty of opportunities.

What influence did your friends have on your academic success – encourage you to do well, a distraction, give examples. I have a strong group of friends, who have been together throughout school. We all like sport, play for the school teams and want to go on the university. It's what the school wants for us as well. Our Parents have not been to university but things are changing and you need to go if you are going to be able to leave out of the town and have a decent career.

Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to you at school or home which have helped you to do well in education? I really like PE and have had some great teachers, it is not only rugby but cricket as well I really enjoy. I think playing for the school teams and locally made me think about becoming a PE teacher, but I also have a love of English and my teachers think this might be better for me to study at Exeter.

Your future

What do you expect to do after year 11, year 13? I am doing A levels and then going to university as I want to be a teacher. If you wish to go to university – where and what to study? I would like to study PE but I think I will do English and history as this is a better option for me.

What has made you decide to go to university? Did you parents go? Have friends or members of your family gone to university? My parents did not go but my sister has. Dad and Mum really want us to go and so do I.

When you are earning – where would you like to live – what place? Ideal house? I don't really mind, where ever I can get a good job. It's easy to travel so I don't need to be that close to my family. I would like my own home, but as long as it nice and comfortable I don't really mind.

What things would show you that you have achieved success later in life? Having a job I really enjoy, being a teacher in a good school, with plenty of friends and being able to play sport.

Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your education? I think they both have been important in different ways. I needed good teachers to get me through the exams, and to make sure I enjoyed the subjects. Mum and Dad have done a lot as well, we are the only ones that have gone on to study A levels, my cousins have not. My parents have made sure we worked hard in school.

Interview with Mrs. Mark

How many children do you have? Do you have a partner? I have two children, one daughter and my son Mark. I have been married for many years, and lived on the estate since we married. We have always lived close to our family members; our garden adjoined my parents' garden. This was lovely for the children as they grew up having their grandparents so close.

Do you and your partner work? What jobs do you do? If not how long have they been out of work? What job did you/partner do before? We both work locally he is a foreman in the work studies department of the XXX factory and I work as a clerk in the accounts department of XXX factory. My husband left school and joined the navy and then joined the company he is with now. I worked for the post office for a while then had the children and have had a couple of administrative jobs since joining this firm.

Did you pass exams at 16, 19, or 21? We both left school at 16, my husband is quite bright and got some examinations I just passed the basics. He went to the local school when it was the local grammar school, so was able to take some examinations.

Your education

Did your children attend a play group or nursery? Yes he went morning at the local nursery close to the school, and then went on to join the school. They did lovely activities there. The teachers were great with them. Mark was quite active as a lad and this was so good for him.

Why did you choose for your family to attend the research school? We looked at a few of the local schools, they all had something to offer, but I think we chose correctly and they have done well, both of them. We are very proud.

Why do you think he has achieved well at school? One primary school teacher spoke to me when his sister (who is three year's older than him) was in the upper primary, stating that we should ensure she was encouraged to complete GCSEs and A levels and go on to university. The school continued to encourage us and stressed how bright our daughter was. When Mark was in the upper primary they told us a similar thing. For our daughter science and mathematics are her strongest subjects while for Mark he is more creative and with English literature, drama and sports dominating his talent bank.

Creating success in education

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are? Yes we have lots of books, all sorts. We all read a lot and regularly use the library as well.

Did you read regularly to your children as they were growing up? Yes, his father did a lot, as a young boy when his father came home for lunch he would read to him, the shifts were staggered so the long break meant there was plenty of time to come home and help with the children. We always read to him as well at bed time. He would then read on his own when he was older; using a torch under the bed clothes even after the light was out.

Do they you see you reading regularly for your own pleasure/work? Not so much me, but his father did, the newspaper every day at breakfast and then books when we had spare time. I read more when he was out at school or after he went to bed.

Do you eat together as a family around a table? We try to, definitely in the evenings and at weekends, the morning are more fluid as they all leave at different times now.

If you do is this time a time when you can talk together as a family? Yes in the evening we talk quite a lot, we like to hear about their days. Now they are older, just like teenagers they like to argue a lot and Mark has quite strong opinions about matters especially politics and these differ strongly from his dad

What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday? Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced your child to do well in school? What influence did their friends have on their academic success – encouragement to do well, a distraction, give examples?

Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to them at school or home which have helped you to do well in education? Playing in the school team for rugby and having a strong interest in sport has developed a particular competitive spirit within Mark I believe and this desire to always do his best and not to let the team down was drummed into him strongly by his father who was always a strong rugby player and lived by these ideals.

Your future

What have they wanted to do while growing up as a job/career? Do you think you have had any influence on them? Mark has wanted to do a number of things, sport has always been important but being a teacher more recently is the focus for him. I don't think we have influenced the teacher side of things, that is school but the males in the family have always watched and played a lot of sport.

Do they wish to go to university – where and what to study? How does this make you feel? I am delighted he wishes to go to university, he wishes to stay in the south west, and is keen on Exeter as it has a strong reputation for English and also PE.

What has made them decide to go to university? Did you go? Have friends or members of the family gone to university? His sister has gone, but his dad and I have encouraged them, we never went but we want them to have better than we had.

What things would show you that they have achieved success later in life? As long as they are healthy and happy. But also in work and with enough to live a secure life.

What more do you think the school could have one to help or others to achieve in education? I am pleased with the school, it has served him well.

Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your child's education? Definitely the school and his father has also stressed how important a good education is.

Interview with Ashlee

How many brothers and sisters do you have? Which number child are you? I have 1 sister, 1 brother and 1 half-sister, I am the eldest.

Do your parents work? What jobs do they do? If they don't how long have they been out of work? What job did they do before? Both mum and dad work, mum is PA and dad is a print finisher.

Did your parents pass exams at 16, 19, or 21? Both Mum and Dad passed 'O levels' / CSE's and then left school and started work at 16

Did you attend a play group or nursery? Neither I did not go to nursery nor did I go to play group just start school at the age of reception. I attended the local primary school.

Why did you and your parents choose for you to attend Headlands/Swindon Academy? We lived close to Headlands at the time I was due to attend secondary school and I wanted to go there as all my friends were going too

Why do you think you have achieved well at school? I knew at an early age that I wanted to go on to higher education and knew that doing well at school would enable me to go to college and subsequently onto university

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are? Around 20, the majority are text books or those related to my university course, also a few non-fiction.

Did your parents read regularly to you as you have grown up? Not every day but regularly enough that I can remember it

Do you see your parents reading? Not very often, but that's mainly due to lack of free time

Do you eat together as a family around a table? We didn't have a dining room table to eat on at home but my granny and granddad did and I visited their house when I was younger

Are there other times when you have conversation with your family or other adults? We always spoke about lots of things every day when at home and when we went out for a meal. I still speak to my friends a lot now.

What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday? We have been to Florida for the past 3 years, and before that we went on holiday in England every year as far back as I can remember! We would always do activities together on holiday usually pre planned ones like going to theme and water parks

Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced you to do well in school? In particular my mum, but my dad is also been encouraging.

What influence did your friends have on your academic success – encourage you to do well, a distraction, give examples. Quite big influences, as they also had the wish to do well and we would often do our homework together and help each other revise. We always encouraged each other to do well as school was very important to us.

Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to you at school or home which have helped you to do well in education? The fact my mum and dad work so hard I wanted to make them proud by doing well, especially my mum because of the difficult time that we've been through. Also I am the only person in my family to go to university since my uncle who is now 47, so I was working towards that goal

What do you expect to do after year 11, year 13? I want to go to University and then to follow a career either in the police or an area related to crime.

If you wish to go to university – where and what to study? I am interested in studying criminology at the University of Gloucestershire. Which is quite close to home but I would live away, but able to travel home if needed.

What has made you decide to go to university? Did your parents go? Have friends or members of your family gone to university? I believe that in the particular field I want to go to a degree, it would definitely benefit me, neither of my parents went to university, all of my closest friends have gone or going to university, my uncle went to Reading University and now runs a multi-million pound company in Switzerland!

When you are earning – where would you like to live – what place? I am aiming to live in a city like Bristol or Reading when I graduate, but not a huge city like London, as I will probably be living with my boyfriend ideally a one or 2 bedroom flat, house if we can afford it!

What things would show you that you have achieved success later in life? If I get a job within the field I have studied for 3 years, even if it isn't exactly what I want, as long as it is related, I will be happy

What more do you think the school could have done to help you or others to achieve in education?

Pay more attention to students that actually follow the rules and recognise their achievements as being big ones rather than praising students for smaller things like for example just showing up to school or going to lessons which are presumably the bare minimum and the things that are required of you by just being at school

Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your education?

Family, as I think I would have tried hard at any school I went to, it didn't matter which one it was, whereas having a strong family support network and a home you are happy in to go back to every day I think that is more important

Interview with Ms Ashlee

Can you tell me about your educational background? I went to the local infants and junior school.

So you were educated locally? Yes I then went on to this school and took CSEs and RSAs. There were no 'O' levels done then because it was a secondary modern school. My brother who was two years older than I am was the last year to go into the sixth form. When I left school I joined a YTS and did a BTEC in office practice and I did shorthand at night school.

What was your partner's educational background? Ashlee's father he worked in a local car hire company when we met. He was adopted and his mother and father just gave him everything he wanted. He had a similar educational background as I had. His work was generally manual work.

What principals do you think lie behind the way you have brought up your daughters? I have always wanted a better life for my children than I ever had. That was the one thing that Miles had said, who was Ashlee's year 7 Head of Year – he said that she had an amazingly rounded education and told her 'you will be able to have the pick of anything in the future.'

Did Miles have a great impact on Ashlee? Oh yes Miles was great he had such a good impact which encouraged her so much and drove her on to succeed. She only once was disappointed

when she did not get the Head of Year prize and Miles had told her that was because he knew me and he did not want people to think she had got it because of that.

What drove you to make sure that Ashlee did have it better than you did? I just am driven by ensuring that life is better for her. I did not wish her to grow up in a house which was not supportive, and staying behind at school to work.

Where there any things in particular you did to carry out this belief? My split with Paul my husband. Paul had been adopted he always had everything from his parents, where as I was one of four. Dad brought home the money and it all had to be split, as well as putting up with all the problems mum caused. I learnt well from my Dad, my mum had misused the money and got our family into problems. Paul got money from his parents all the time, and he carried on as he was wanted he was not paying the bills and we were going into debt. I was not going through all that again. Ashlee was 18 months old when I threw Paul out. I did decide then that I would not talk badly about him in front of her, but this did not stop her seeing who he really was as she grew up, especially when he remarried and his new partner was not nice to me or Ashlee. She does not have a good relationship with him now.

Ashlee has always read well since Primary school. Is there a reason for this? Every Sunday lunchtime while Ashlee was growing up we went to the club and my younger brother and sister would sit reading, Ashlee would be read to by them.

Do you read much? Just the newspaper and my sporting magazines she always saw me read these cover to cover. We did read stories together at bedtime. I always sat with her and talked about school, read her reading books did homework together. That continued through school I would always check her homework. We did enjoy going to the library together. The local library. I enjoyed doing this with my dad when I was young, we had some great time together dad and I at the library, and I loved doing this with Ashlee.

Do you sit down and have meals together? We don't sit together around a table as I have never had a dining room table and chairs. We do sit together, we eat our meals on our trays and talk. Sunday lunch we always try to have our meal together and this is important to me as we never did this as a child we only had a cheese sandwich as mum never cooked. We did use to go to my grandparents; granddad would play games with us while gran cooked. We played rings and this helped me to learn to count. I remember making bread with him as well. I liked to do things with Ashlee as well.

Are there other things that you believe influenced your daughter? His love for criminology has developed from the stories Granddad used to tell when he visited his son in Broadmoor Prison. He was sitting next to Sutcliffe once and told us what a nice man he was to him. Looking beyond what he had done, to the man who was sat with him. Ashlee loved to hear these stories. I definitely think that is what I would have liked to have done, so if Ashlee goes into this line of work I will have partly succeeded. We are so proud of her and so enthusiastic for her to continue to do well. I am always just proud of what she does achieve I just want her to do her best.

My brother had a good influence on her, she loves him, he is two years older than me. He went off to reading University with his work. He was the last year to be able to go into the sixth form so could get A levels. He did planning at university and worked in London, now he works in Switzerland. He has influenced her a lot, we all talked a lot about Mark influencing her, he spent time with her as he had his children later and she was the oldest grandchild. The friends we have have also influenced her they were very competitive although worked hard together, and have been a great support for each other.

What about holidays or days out have they featured in her education? We tend to do things we enjoy doing together. I want them to have a memory of the good times, they don't have this with Paul. We still talk about the good holidays and the poor ones when we went to Butlins it was awful, it makes us laugh now. I really like that she will discuss things with me, that is what I wanted to make her decisions but to always feel she can talk to me.

Interview with Grace

Do you have any other siblings apart from your younger brother? No its just me and my brother and he is 13 years old.

Do both of your parents work? Yes

And what do they do? Dad was ...well Dad's situation is quite difficult to explain he was a chief and then his hand got fractured, he fractured his hand and he was not allowed to work as a chief. So he went to work as a security officer, and not his hand is fine the doctors so, so I think he is thinking about being a chief again.

When he was a chief what sort of cooking did he do? He worked in a restaurant, but I am not sure what he was cooking.

What does your Mum do? Mum is a cleaner.

Has your mum been a cleaner for a long time? No she used to work in a company that packed vegetables but I not too sure what she did.

It was a sort of factory? Yes factory work.

Did your parents do exams at 16,19,21? Yes Dad finished at A levels mum finished with GCSEs and then that was it .

What was the pattern of your early education, did you go to nursery? No, it is quite difficult to explain, my mum when I was born and Dad moved to find work and because he was not trained as a chief at this time it was difficult to get work and it was very difficult for them for a few years so I lived with my grandparents. My little brother was born while they were working away, but I remained with my grandparents and did not go to live with my parents them moved back when I was eight.

To be honest my education was not great I was not very academic then, my cousins they were great with education and they gave me a lot of encouragement, especially from their parents obviously because I did not have any encouragement or motivation from anybody else. So I guess that like hindered by education you might say. I was not very intelligent I never like studied or did well in exams. I did not really listen to anybody it was not until I moved back to live with my parents...when I was nine years old then everything hit me and I realised what it was like to get the love from your parents and the motivation so that helped me afterwards.

When you lived with your grandparents did you see your parents regularly? I did not see them at all.

When you joined your parents what was your primary school education like? I was in year 4 when I joined mum and dad. We moved a lot, and I did year 5 in a different school when we moved to London and stayed there for a bit and I started year 6 in Woking, and then we moved again to Reading where I did year 7 and then we moved to Swindon and I joined year 8.

Why did your parents select this school when you moved to this town? Mum and Dad selected it because some of their friends used to live here and they suggested the school as it was close to the house. We looked at the web site and we liked it.

If you had to assess your success what things would you say were key? My parents definitely and especially Dad, since a young age when I moved to be with them Dad has re-enforced education in me. At one point when I was young I thought why does he keep going on and on. Even when we went on holiday, even as a little child I used to think holidays are meant to be fun then, we went on holidays and Dad would say like 'take a book', and say I should take a revision guide with me, but now when we go on holiday he does not need to tell me as it is me packing the books and he is like don't take your books with you and we always argue and I say I want to study. Mum as well, she is not as academic as Dad but she is like in an emotional kind of way mum is like always been my barrier, she doesn't really judge me or anything, because at first Dad had doubts in me, like before I got my GCSE grades, he did not think that I would have done well, but after I got the grades he was like...

Why do you think he thought you might not do so well? Was that you thinking Dad was doubting you? Yes Dad is like the type of person who would never show he is proud. He is not the type of person who would hug you and say oh well done honey you did really well. He would try hiding it and outside he would seem like a really strict person but you can see when you look into his eyes that he is proud of you.

He was very very proud of you when I opened my results and the teachers definitely helped me. I don't know what I would have done without my teachers. Not just my class teachers but those around school they are also always encouraging us, it is really helpful when you can speak to teachers and they treat you well more like a friend than just another student. They encourage us to go to university, to do well, work hard for these two years and the rest of your life will be made for you.

You have already mentioned books, when you lived with your grandparents did they read a lot? My grandma she was not educated, she could not read and my grandpa could a little but he did not read unless he needed to. When I was a young child books were not really part of my life.

So up to the age of nine you did not have books but you have turned this around so we could conclude that it is never too late to start if a child did not have books and educational opportunity as a child. – No it is never too late, just as people say if you do not have educated parents you cannot have educated views I don't think that is right at all. If it depends on the type of person you are if you have positive thoughts then you will not get anywhere.

What do you think brought about this change? – When I went to live with my parents at first I was not all that focused but when we moved to London I met my cousin who was at Bristol University training to be a doctor, she was just graduating and she was going to live in Bristol and I went to visit her in Bristol and she really inspired me so much, and I wanted to be a doctor as well. I promised myself that I was going to work hard that I would be better than her one day. My brother and I read a lot of books and tried really hard even though I did not understand everything.

Was it important that it was a female member of your family? Yes it was really important. I don't think it would have been the same if she was not a woman doctor.

Do you eat meals together as a family? That only happens on Saturdays and Sundays, mum works late at night during the week. But I can talk to mum and dad at any point I like, and before I leave for school every day Dad is like make sure you do well at school, it gets annoying

but every day, when you step out of the door you can hear him shouting this “make sure you do well at school, work hard, pay attention.” And when I come home from school its, “what did you do at school. Come and tell me everything.” Although he does not really understand the work he is still interested.

Are there other adults in the family apart from the doctor that have inspired you to do well? Our extended family is spread all over the place and so we continually go to different places to see them and Dad always encourages us to talk with the adults. We also do a lot of educational things, Dad is so keen and loves to talk about things, so he impacts this to me.

Family have obviously been really important to you, what about friends what place have they played? A very important part if I did not have Ricky than I do not think I would have been so successful as I am now. When I am at home and not really wanting to do anything sitting there watching the Disney channel and I think Ricky he will be working so I get on , turn off the TV and then study. Sometimes my parents have a go at me that is all I do , stay in my bedroom and cram and stuff so they get worried about me at times but friends that are not just into education but they are laid back, we have fun with. With Ricky we can do school stuff but we also gossip so much, like two old people. You need people who give you balance.

If you had to weigh up between home and school, where are the important factors in gaining success? Well for me, well school is like my second home, I know it sounds chessy, but it is. It is like the teachers are my friends and I feel safer here than at home in a way because I can work harder here than at home because when I am at school I have teachers that are constantly motivating me, telling me I can get there and even the teachers that don't teach me even a smile can make a difference.

When I am walking round school and I would see the head and the deputy as they were walking around the corridors, and they would say hello, how are you, are your lessons ok? Even that would make such a difference to a student's life because you feel, oh my God even the head teacher really cares about me. They have got thousands of students to look after but they personally come to me and ask me how I am. I really feel cared for and that motivates me so much.

Apart from motivating though the smile what else do staff do? Providing us with a variety of new opportunities. Year 10 we went to residential at Cambridge University. Before this I was keen to go to Oxford or Cambridge, but this made it real and I now think I can really go. I have had a one track mind since then to go.

What next then after university? I want to find the cure for Prengira. I watched a movie with Mum and dad about a young child who had Prengira It was so emotional that once the movie stopped I went to my lap top to research it. I realised that it. I realised that it was very rare and people who have it only live until late teens 18 or 19. It really inspired me to help those people because I don't think because it is such a rare disorder that there has really not been much research into it. I think because scientists think it is not affecting too many people unless cancer which has so much research this does not. I want to go to Cambridge and I want to get to help to find the cure for Prengira.

When you started at this school did you think you would be going to Cambridge? Yes because this was after I had met my cousin at Bristol, the doctor and I have decided at that point. I said I will go to University. But to go to Cambridge has come since I have been here and I went on that residential. The teachers here have made me believe that I can do it. As a young child I was not an intelligent child so I never thought it possible. I am still insecure and if I don't work hard I know that I am not intelligent. Dad is like motivating me now, because he knows I am insecure, he knows I get really good GCSE grades and so there is nothing stopping me getting

into Cambridge, if with those grades I don't feel secure because there are other students in my year who got good grades and they really did not study. I know I only got my grades because I really did study. I cannot call myself really talented I think I am a little bit insecure because my brother he is so intelligent, he knows more than me. He has a really sharp brain, I get really embarrassed when I am with him, and Dad, and because he has been with them ever since he was born obviously he got more chances since he was like six or seven years old he has known all his timetables up to 20. I did not know up to 12 so I would think oh no he is so smart, he is going to do so much better than me in life. Even now he knows all the capital cities of the world. Dad quizzes me and him and I am like Dad I really don't want to do this quiz. He would say why – you are trying to compare me with him and he is so clever, and so I feel so embarrassed when I am around him because I feel I am meant to be older than him and feel so challenged because he knows so much more than me and I get really scared.

Where do you see yourself living in a few weeks? I don't imagine myself living in a certain place but I do see myself working overseas in a country like Africa, and build a free health clinic. But I will do this for a little time as I don't want to leave England. I would like to live in a house in the countryside. I won't leave England I love England.

But you don't see yourself living in Swindon? Oh God no, no.

You said that with such certainty! Absolutely.

Are there any other things that the school could have done? No I think the school has been really good with students, one like students who work and want to do well, we have done lots, like the residential and when we met Desmond Tutu that was a highlight of my life. Oxford University on open days we have done so much, academic trips and like fun trips to Thorpe Park. School has done lots for us.

But the school is not successful with every child so how can we make a real difference with them? I really this, can I name names? Leanne, I made friends with her, and she comes from a family where the parents are not very academic as well and we made friends in year 10 and in year 7-9 she was well you know a student that was not very motivated she never used to pay attention in lessons, she did never did any revision she did not know what it was, she would ask be how do you revise, and what is revision and we became friends. I think that like every student needs motivation, encouragement, regardless of what type of family they come from. And what Leanne got was friends that were so motivated she can and told me one day that if it was not for you guys I would not have done so well. I would not be where I am today. She was so motivated. We were not like all the other teenagers talking about going to arties getting drunk and Leanne said this really helped her because her other friends all the conversations were about boys and parties. But I believe everyone needs a good friend or even like teachers. I think if teachers go and talk to a child rather than have a go at them if they ask them what their problem is, or how they can help them, every child could improve and do well. That is the way I see it.

How did you suddenly become a friend with Leanne? I used to stay back after school by myself. Ricky stayed but in other subjects we used to walk home together, One day Leanne got moved next to me in one of my classes. We just started talking and she seemed quite interested in sciences. I asked if she went home and did science and she was like 'Oh God no. I don't even have a book at home. I was like would you like to stay after school one day and maybe I could teach you, and may be you can teach me things I don't know. Since then we stayed back after school every day and I like became her teacher. It was good as she challenged me, she would say hang on how does that work, how did you get that. It challenged

me, so I tried to find out answers for her and for myself and that way we both learnt more. This friendship has been a great motivator.

Interview with Ricky

Do you have any brothers and sisters? I am the youngest one and I have one brother who is 19.

Do your parents work? Yes, my mum is a specialist Teaching Assistant and my dad works making plastic limbs. It is in Swindon. He has worked there a long time and mum has worked as a TA since I was 15.

Did your brother do well in his examinations as well? Yes we did have sort of brother rivalry.

Was this expectation from you or your parents? A bit of both I wanted to do better than him but they also wanted me to do well.

Did your parents take exams? Yes but I am not sure what they got. They finished schools at 16 and so would have done their O levels they did not stay on to do A levels. I think they probably got maths and English that sort of thing. They went on and did other qualifications at evening classes.

What are your future plans? I would like to go to university. My brother is planning to go to university, this year he has carried on doing his trampoline coaching. He is working at my mum's school at the moment as a TA.

Will you be the first ones to go to university in your family? Yes my immediate family, as some of my cousins have gone and trained to be teachers.

As a child did you go to a playgroup or nursery? I went to a play group when I was 2 and then I went to the school nursery and then in to reception, the local school to our home.

Why did your parents send you to this school? I think it was the year that the school was to re-open and they went to the open evening and heard all the new ideas for the school and they were really good and they really wanted me to go to the local school although it had not been a good school before then. We did think about the other two schools but they liked what they heard about this one. They also knew one of the PE teachers who had just come to this school. They had met him on the year 6 open day and they liked him and believed what he said. My brother was here and he had a really good relationship with the sports teachers and this was important.

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Yes we have loads of books all over the house, we both have book cases in our bedrooms, and my room is a bit like a library I really like books.

Do you see your parents reading? Yes mum and dad both read, we have a variety of books from educational and reference books to story books. As a kid I saw mum and dad reading mainly on holiday. It was good to see my parents reading and they have encouraged me to read all the way through primary school. When I got home from school my mum would help me with my reading homework and then as I was older she encouraged me to do my homework, we did it together and she would check it, read it through or help me to remember things. Spellings we did together.

Did both mum and dad read with you? Yes they both did.

Do you eat together as a family? We usually do on Sunday around the table. When we are having our roast dinner. The other times we have our meals on trays, we do talk to each other generally it is boring stuff but we do talk.

When I get home I normally dump my bag down and the first thing I do is start to talk with my mum about the school day.

Are there other times when you speak with adults? Our family are very close knit family even the extended family and every Saturday we as a family would all go around to my aunts, it's all my gran and grandpa's doing, and on the Sunday we would all go to my other aunt's. Then at Christmas we would gather together and then at Easter well. I would also go to stay with my grandparents and they would read with me or do my homework with me.

What about family holidays? Yes we went on family holidays. I remember going to Spain in 2009 there was a lot of us who went as normal. Dad had read a lot about where we were going and what we could see when we got there. We did a lot of the cultural things, and dad acted like a guide on the holiday and told us about all the places. We went and saw a cathedral.

Was there a particular family member who has helped you with your education? I definitely think my mum has been the driving force in all of it as I have come home some days and been like 'I really can't do this' and she has picked me up and she has said that I can do it and so I go up to my room and look at my work and have a go.

I actually think my brother has helped as well, I know we have our banter we argue and we do whatever other brothers do but he is like 'I have these grades you need to beat them he has always encouraged me as well. It has not been like a selfish ambition, I hope you don't get them grades – it has been good banter. I have got to beat his A levels grades but he got two A*s. I will try to at least equal them. My whole family has encouraged me along the way.

What influence do you think your friends have had in your academic success? They have been amazing, really, really good to see them studying has motivated me. If I am at home and I am thinking I am sat here watching the telly, and I am not doing anything productive, I think someone else is at home and they have their books out and are studying why am I not doing anything so I go straight and get my books out and start studying straight away that's my motivation.

If someone did not have a good home situation, do you think friends can compensate and help to drag them through their studies? What makes a good friend to work alongside?

As long as they are honest with me and they can make me work and study with them, encourage and motivate me, because obviously there are going to be times now and then when I am at university when I am going to feel rubbish, and that I cannot do it and that it is too hard, but as long as they help me through it then I think that they are good friends and I will keep them.

Having motivation and having that challenge seems to be what is coming from what you are saying. – yes.

If you had to come down to particular things you have done at school or at home. What would be the key things you would say, my success at school has been because...

Hmm, this is going to sound really cheesy but it has been the teachers, the inspiration of the teachers, a lot of the teachers that were here when I was in year 7 have now gone now, but

they were the ones that said, 'you need to do this, you need to do that'. This was something that I needed, that would help me ensure that I get my work done.

Where there particular teachers that encouraged you? Yes the PE teacher and my history teacher.

What was it that made these teachers particularly work for you? Basically they nagged me in a nice way, and said you will be successful if you do this, especially when it was coming up to exam times. My history teacher spent plenty of time with me showing me how to write exam answers and essays, she was experienced in marking and gave me lots of tips. She really knew what she was doing and hammered all the tips into us, really good advice for the exam.

Do you think she had confidence that you were going to do well? Yes she never doubted that, if we ever doubted ourselves, like we did after the surgery exam in June we came out feeling that we had not done very well she kept saying 'no you did do well.' We came out with A*. Many teachers know their stuff, but there is something about when the teacher believes in you that makes a difference.

Do you know where you will go to university or what you will study? I definitely want to go to university, this again sounds cheesy but I love education. I love learning and facing new challenges, new subjects, so I definitely want to go to university I am thinking about Oxford or Cambridge or Bath. I quite like the look of Bath University to do humanities, like history or geography or history with English, subject like that are what I am interested in.

And then where? And then into teaching.

When do you think you made a decision to go off to university because you said at the very beginning of the interview that you are the first in your immediate family , mum and dad did not go – when do you think you thought you would go to university? I think it was when I was starting to do my GCSEs and realising all the big exams were coming up so in the middle of year 10, so I thought yes I really need to go to university because obviously going into a profession such as teaching you need to so I had that sort of determination to go there and it will be a great experience.

When you went home and said you were going to be a teacher you also knew that you would be going to university, were your parents really supportive? Yes my mum, she is and my brother also wants to go to into that sort of area.

Are there any worries as this is a new adventure for your family to go off to university? Yes there is of course due to the fees, the financial worries which I suppose is the most important one that I will face and this is effecting other students decisions to go. But apart from that there are no worries what so ever. I just want to go and do it. The advice that I have got from many teaches is that the money you pay for the loan only comes out once you start earning, and they take it out a little bit so that's why I am not really worried. Do you picture yourself in teaching living in a particular area of the country? I have not really thought about that really. I have always had my ideal dream house as a house in the country side, where it is all peaceful, just like me and my family all in this house, not too far away from extended family, and where I work, but I just like the idea of the countryside probably somewhere in this county.

You don't necessarily see yourself remaining in this estate? No, no!

You said that with quite some certainty why was that? (Laugh) I just want to go to university it is a time for me to escape and to get away and I think once I have got my degree and have started my teacher training and everything I just want to escape and everything.

Why do you use the word escape? Because area like this has got a bad reputation, a bad name, and I don't like it when they get slated. I have lived here all my life. Just like the school has a bad reputation that it is not very successful and not many students like us go to university or anything.

Your parents have obviously worked really hard to move you and your brother on. Do you see them leaving this estate? They have worked hard and are considering moving and living elsewhere, but not while I am in education. I told them that they are not moving anywhere until I have left home.

Do you think that there is more that the school could have done to help you to have achieved more? I don't think the school has let me down in anyway. I would have liked to have seen more opportunities to go and visit universities, so we can get ideas about what we want. But in terms of letting me down, absolutely not, I don't think so at all.

Would you say the school or your family has influenced you most in your success? Definitely a combination of both. I don't know which order I would put them in because to me teachers , my friends are like family, you build a strong relationship with them, you are with them every day. I think school, I can't really say that, family have been a major support, in obviously to encourage my studies and to go far and achieve in education but school, it's the driving force, the teachers, I just can't give them enough credit.

Do you think if you did not have the support at home you would have been as successful? Yes probably not. Having teachers that have encouraged me and my parents if both had not been there it would not have been as easy. It would have been much more difficult. As I said I have the support like with my work even since I was young, I have just been told to get on with it, but without I really don't think I would have achieved as much.

Interview with Yvonne

How many brothers or sisters do you have? I don't have any brothers or sisters. I am an only child.

Do your parents work? Yes my father is a chief and my mother is a waitress.

Did your parents gain their qualifications at 16, 19, and 21? My parents left school at 16, they did not really take many exams as their families were quite poor and needed them to start work.

Did you go to nursery when you were young? I started school before I was four but during that year I had to change school because we moved and I went from a small school to a much larger one and I think that was quite scary, but the change made me become a little more confident in myself. I had to change again due to my parents' jobs and moved to this school at the start of my GCSEs.

What do you think has made you do well at school? My parents have insisted on me doing my homework and at my previous school you had to do it, but here other children did not do so much homework and the teachers seemed to think that was ok. So I did so much better because I was doing my work. My parents did not do well and want me to do better and so that I will not be an embarrassment to them and have no work. I think the teachers have helped me a great deal here as I can always ask them and they always have time for me and help me.

Why did your parents select this school? As I started later this school was the only school which had places so we came here. It was close to my house and we were told it was a good school. Yes dad visited the school and liked it so I came here.

Do you have 50 or more books at home? Yes we probably have 50 books they are things like dictionaries, cook books, and some story books.

Did your family read to you when you were growing up? No they never had the time as they were working long hours.

Did this have an impact on you? Yes, and they have never been able to help me with my homework as they also don't have the knowledge of the subjects I am studying so this has been hard. It would have been nice to have had them read to me, and I think it would have meant I knew more things and perhaps would not have had to work so hard.

Do you see your parents reading books? I sometimes see my father reading cookery books when he is working on a new menu or having to learn and new recipe. I don't see my mother reading.

Do you eat together around a table? Yes once a weekend at the weekend. We then talk and I tell them what has happened at school during the week. I might also talk to them about things I will be doing and if I need them to support me or help me for a decision.

Are there other times when you can speak to your parents? If I have something important to tell them then I will call them and speak to them. Because they work long hours we don't get much time.

Do you go on holiday? Yes we do my parents take their four weeks off at the same time which means we can visit places in England or we can go to see family members. That's been the general pattern.

Is there a family member who has influenced you most with your education? Yes this would be my dad. He works so hard and has tried to gain further qualifications for his career and he needed English and Maths so studied for these and needed to get up early in the morning before he went to work to study but he worked hard and when he took them he passed first time. But he had to work so hard that I am determined to pass mine now I am at school and I am staying on to sixth form so must not waste this opportunity which my parents did not have.

Has anything happened while at school that has helped you to do well in education? I think the recent campaign to be Head Girl has really helped as the teachers have encouraged me and so have the students and this has shown me the confidence they have in me and they believe that I have done so well.

What do you want to do when you leave sixth form? I want to go to university. I want to get a higher education as this will get me a much better job. I would like to go to the top universities like Bath or Bristol. These are close to my house so I can live with my parents and still study. This will be the only way that we will be able to finance it, so its common sense really. I would like to study Business as this will be good for getting a good job; I am also good at maths so financial work would be open to me.

What has made you decide to go to university? My parents never went so I need to know more about it, they encourage me to be the first in my family ever to go to university and this would make them so proud. They really encourage me to do well and that way I can have a good future.

What is your dream for the future? I want a nice house but it does not have to be that big, but I want to be happy and have enough things for that. I would like to live here, as long as I start work and earn at least twenty thousand a year I would be able to buy a house and live close to family.

What would success look like to you in the future? I want a future that is not boring. I hope I am an accountant and am able to look after my family as they are really important to me. I would like to be able to see them more as they have worked so hard and I would like to help them when they are old.

What do you think the school could have done to help you more with your achievements? I think we should have more trips and be taken out more so we can widened our knowledge not just what we read and study. We also need a good balance between or study and some leisure time which we don't have much opportunity for around here.

Who has influenced you most home or school in your educational achievement? I think it has been both of them, school and family have both played different but important parts.

Interview with Leanne

How many brothers and sisters do you have and which number child are you? I have four sisters and I am fourth in the family line.

Do your parents work? yes

What work do they do? My mum works in the M&S warehouse, and my dad works at the same place. Before they worked there my mum worked at ToysRus as a cleaner, and my dad worked at Cloverleafs the templates maker.

Did you parents pass exams at 16, 19 or 21? I don't know I am not really sure if they passed any exams they left school at 16 though.

Do you go to a nursery or a playground? I went to nursery.

Did this have an impact on you do you think? I really don't remember much about nursery, but I suppose it helped me to make friends and learn those social skills. It was a good thing as I have grown up with some of these friends.

Why did your parents choose to send you to come to this school? Because all of my friends were there or going there.

Did you have lots of information about this school before you went there? No I don't think we had any it was just the nearest school to us.

Why do you think you have done so well at School? Because my friends influenced me. The teachers helped me as well but my friends like Grace helped me more.

Were you always motivated to do well? No not always not until I realised that I had to do well, but that I also wanted to do well. Some teachers said that they were not surprised by my pattern of behaviour and that I was going the same way as my sisters But this changed.

What made you believe this? I don't want to grow up and have to live in this place because I don't like it here. When I grow up I want to have money buy a car. I want to be able to give my children money whenever I want. Not like my mum as a single parent, she has done her best but I don't want to be like that.

Do you as a family have more than 50 books in your house? No

Did your parents read to you regularly when you were growing up? My mum read me bedtime stories and dad used to help me with my homework.

Do you think this had an impact on you? NO she just read to me and I fell asleep, I am not sure if it did have any effect on me.

Do you see your parents reading? My mum reads the newspaper sometimes. I don't see my dad that much so I am not sure.

Do you as a family eat together around a table? No we eat on the sofa. If mum can be bothered to cook we eat together but if not we have to cook our own food.

When you do sit together what do you talk about? Well just normally stuff, she asks me what I did that day and I ask her if work was ok. But if something bothers me I can just talk to mum at any time, just tell her straight away. I don't really speak with my sisters as they are always busy. But if I want to speak with Kayleigh I just ring her up, because she has got her kids and she is at college.

What about at school with teachers? Yes sometimes.

What types of holidays have you been on? I have had a few holidays as a family we went to Spain, and then like camping trips. But we have not been on holiday for a couple of years. When we did go they were just leisure times we just had fun. We used to go camping quite a lot but now that dad has moved out we don't.

Has one family member been more influential on you then any other? My sister Kayleigh. Because she had kids when she was eighteen and she worked at Deanwater and she might be made redundant and she realised that she wanted to do better and now wanted to be a radiographer. So she wanted to go to college and to university now. She always moans at me about doing it as she wanted to do it. She encourages me. My mum helps me. But she says just to do whatever makes me happy. She leaves it up to me, she trusts me I guess.

What impact do you think your friends have had on you and your academic success? Some of my friends distracted me. Then I made new friends and they influenced me and that is what helped me to get my grades. Because my new friends loved to study and I wanted to be with them I studied as well. We would encourage each other but when my new friends were not there I would get distracted by my old friends as they were not working and did not see the point.

Do you think there has been any particular things that have helped you to do well in school? Well when my friends helped me to study and I got that first A that really encouraged me to carry on because I knew that I could now do it but if I did not study I would not get another A. That really encouraged me because I believed before that, that I would barely get a C or a D. when I got that A I could not believe it I thought it must be a mistake. After that I did start to believe that it really was possible and I could do it.

What do you wish to do when you leave sixth form? , Apply to university, I would like to go to a big university but I am not sure that I will get there. Mr Lewis said that Coventry University was good for social care which is what I want to study so I think I will try there.

Why do you want to go to university, many people say you will get into debt? Well you won't if you study and get your degree and then get a good job, because you are properly qualified; because you will make enough money to pay the money back. My parents never went to university I will be the first in my family if I go although my step brother is at university now. I do want to be the first person of my mum's kids to go to university to break through that barrier.

What would tell you that you had succeeded in later life? I would like to live in London. I want to live somewhere big and expensive and have a massive house. To have a Range Rover, Mercedes and a BMW or three of them. I know that I will have achieved success when I have kids and they want to grow up like me. When they want to go to university and have nice things like I have. That will really make me happy. But if I become a social worker that will be a bit of success to me as well.

What else could the school have done to ensure you had success? I don't think there is anything because I think really that the school can't really influence people it is what they want to do.

Would you say the school or your family has been most influential in your educational success? I think it has been family and friends and the friends have been really important.

Interview with Becky

Who is at home living in your family? My mum, my dad is not living with us currently.

Do they all work? My mum does in an office locally, and my Dad works with computers somewhere.

When you were at primary school were you aware that you were doing better in your studies than the other children? Yes.

What made you think this? When I was in year 4 me and another girl we went into a year 5 class to do maths, we were the only ones who did this. I was also in all the higher groups all the time and on the highest reading books as I have always liked to read a lot. I read year 5 and 6 books when I was in year 3.

How did you do in the SATs tests? I think I got all 3's and then all 5s, but I don't really remember a lot about them. I just remember that I found things quite easy from an early age, and have always seemed to pick things up easily. I was always good at reading and this helped I liked to read absolutely anything and everything.

Did you parents pass exams at 16, 19 or 21? They finished school at 16 with few exams. Mum went to this school, but dad lived in the centre of town and went to that one.

Do you go to a nursery or a playground? Yes I went to the local nursery, mum worked locally and my grandparents took me.

Why did your parents choose to send you to come to this school? We could walk to the primary school which had a good reputation then, when all the change happened I was already settled and could walk to this school. Mum has thought about changing school but there are no places now at the one we want and the other one is no better than here.

Why do you think you have done so well at School? I have worked hard; others have not and don't seem to care. I have some good teachers, maths teacher, and my business studies teacher. I have liked doing the Gifted and talented programme [with the local public school] and we have visited the school on special days, but I like the special lectures and the tutor who comes here.

Do you have a lot of books at home? Yes quite a lot, and we use the library a lot. My friends think I am a bit strange because I like to visit the library after school, they say why are you always reading, reading is so boring. I am a really fast reader as I like to know what happens and people say I am only skimming it but I am not I am just very fast and seem to always have been. I think reading has helped be a lot to get ahead.

What types of books do you read? I have liked history books, and I did read all the horrible histories when I was younger, but generally I like to read fiction. I think these help my imagination a lot and that has been good for literature.

What else has really helped you? As a person I pick things up quickly as I am quite a good learner. When I was younger my mum would play lots of games with me. I remember one which we called the hand up game, as it was the first one to put your hand up. Mum would ask a lot of maths questions. My cousin was a bit older so better than me so that meant I tried even harder, but mum said I was better than her for my age. I also have always done my homework with mum and I think a lot of my friends don't do theirs. If they do they would just scribble it down or copy it off one of their friends.

If mum was not encouraging you to do your homework would you have done it? She does not need to now, but it helped when I was in primary school and then I just got into the habit. But I still need to do it the day I get it otherwise I start to find excuses why I don't want to do it and then it is really hard to do it. I used to rush off some of my work but then that did not seem like my best and I find that if I work in the library and research things a bit more then I find that they are more interesting and I can work better on them.

Are there any other things that have helped you? Mum used to make me write out my timetables when I was at home, I wrote them out again and again until I learnt them, I did like doing that. She would then ask me questions and I like to see if I could get them all right. Sometimes I would get in a mood especially if I got them wrong.

I have been on the G&T programme but I don't think this has really helped with my examinations as they don't do the same subjects etc. I quite liked it in year 9 when I went but lately I have not really wanted to go as we get back really late and I don't like that.

What about holidays and trips out? We would go and visit my grandparents every summer holidays, they live now on the coast, it's a three hour drive, but it is good for their health, they were able to do a house swap for a smaller place, but most of their friends have never been that far and think they will come back. I like knowing where places are, another of my friends when asked the capital of China said India. I just am amazed at some people, we had a general knowledge quiz in class and my friends were like how do you know that, I am like how do you not know it. It is so obvious.

So how do you think you know these things? I like to read the newspaper, at home we always have a newspaper and when I see it I will pick it up and read it. I suppose I am just a naturally nosey sort of person. I don't read all the political stuff just the bits that interest me, but I see the pictures and I suppose I just become aware of what is happening in the world.

What things do you think have really made you successful while others have not been? I think that a lot of my year find the things I like to do just boring. They would rather be out with their friends or playing with their video games. I don't really like playing video games I would rather be reading, or drawing I do like to draw.

So do you think these different interests are due to the different things that you do at home? Yes we are a close family. My mum is quite ill at times and finds it hard to do all the jobs I help her and stay at home with her, we are very close.

Do you eat together as a family? Yes mum and I do every night, we cook together. We do a lot together really we are really close.

What do you think you will do in the future? I want to be in business, and work in a large firm and train in management. So I need top A-level grades to study at university, or to go on a management scheme.

Has this motivated you to do well in school? Well I have always wanted to work with animals, from about 8 years old. So I think I then wanted to be a vet, but more recently this has been my wish to be in business as this is more me and really motivating. I suppose because I have achieved well in this area I have some of what I need this has really helped.

Have you thought about where you would want to live and work? Not really, I don't really mind, but I might like to travel around the world while I can and see things.

To summarise where do you think most of the push to succeed has come from? I really like to be pushed and feel that if I am not that I will not do it. The push comes from both home and school. My parents they are quite.... My mum has good expectations for me. Sometimes I don't like this and I react but I do really like it. Sometimes if my teachers are not pushing me I might ask them if I can do some more or harder work. But this makes me different as most of my friends they will not ask for any more work, they just do the easy stuff.

Do you think you have influenced your friends? No not really, I have plenty of friends, but I don't see them much out of school, recently I have gone out a bit more, but I like to be at home with mum.

Sometimes people say that a friend has influenced them so do you think this? I don't think I have influenced my friends and I don't think they have had much influence on me as I am quite different and like different things than them.

Is there anything else? I think my grandparents and mum who have been quite strict have been really important to me. They were great and really supportive and knew that I could always do so much better. I think this is a problem when you are bright people think that you are doing so well because you are just better than the others but this might not be your best. My parents they have just pushed me a lot and knew that I could do so much better, this is the main reason I think.

Interview with Billy

What is the make-up of your family? There is mum and dad and my older brother, and I.

Do mum and dad both work? Yes, mum is a teacher and dad is a transport planner.

Where about do you live? Within the school catchment area close to the pub.

What qualifications have Mum and Dad got? Dad did very well, and got O levels and A levels, mum did not do well in school but has completed qualifications with the Open University and has now a degree in mathematics.

Where you aware of education being important in the family as you were growing up? No not really while we were growing up, may be a bit later. At first mum and dad were just like everyone else and had normal jobs then mum got a job at the school and that changed things. She worked as a TA at first and then in the office before training in the school to be a teacher.

Why did your parents select this school for you to attend? They wanted the support they knew the SENCo was excellent. Although I did not think I needed it she was good and I did get a lot of support. She had helped my brother a lot. I don't think this would have happened though if mum had not been working at the school.

What support did you have then from the SENCo? I had a TA support from year 7 to the start of year 10. I had a study class and a session on how to deal with emotions and stress busters. They did help me to organise my homework and generally. She did sometimes pull me in and ask how I was doing. Yer, it was alright. She just kept a check on me and that helped me to know where I was and what I was doing at that point of time.

If she had not been there do you think you would have done as well? Probably not, as difficult as it is to say it. Part of the disability that I have is that I get distracted quite easily and this can make me stressed and then I press the self-destruct button. They stopped me from doing that.

What about your early education do you go to nursery? Yes I went to the same one as by primary school at the age of three. I went to the same primary school until year 5, then changed because there were a number of issues when the head teacher left. One was with a teacher who had a whistle and in order to get the class's attention would continually blow this. One of the other problems I have is very sensitive hearing and I would wander off when it was too noisy and they loss me once. But when I changed school I stopped being picked on in the playground, it was a nice place.

Why did your parents send you to this school? My brother had come here, the new SENCo told her that there were TAs trained who could help me and I wanted to come here and be with my friends. I also liked the size of the school, it's a bit like I like the city and I don't like the countryside. They used to foster a group of friends who all had ASD. This was fine until the lad joined and he was forced on me. The SENCo would give me people as little projects but hey! I did go to hobbies club. That club really fostered my love for competition. What hobbies club did was it had little groups of in-house games like strategy games. But this club gave me this love for competition because I won.

If you had to say what were the key things that helped you to achieve what would these be? It would be hobbies club as this was a time when I won things and realised I could achieve. Mum and dad have always been working whereas other friends their parents are on the dole or at home drinking but our parents have always had driven. So I like the challenge.

Would you like to go to university? Yes most probably although I had zero knowledge of what I might like to do. I quite like design and development so I might need quite a bit of IT for that. I have had a year of not knowing what I wanted to do, up until about three months ago I was changing my ideas all the time. For a long time I wanted to go into the military. I had really wanted to go into the Royal Engineers as I thought this would be fixing up tanks and things. But it is not it is more building walls and roads and bridges. There has been a bit of competitiveness as well as some of my mates have dropped out and are now working in Tesco and I was like 'no I am better than that.' I want to see how far I can push myself.

But where do you think that drive has come from as many have not got it? It is probably a gaming thing that gives me this burning ambition. Gaming features a lot for me, I remember one game which I played many times and always would fail at this particular level but I would come back to this later and would think 'I am going to do this'. I won a worldwide competition that was good and gave me a belief I could win. I just like gaming it is a form of enjoyment but also drives me on. I do use gaming as a method of escapism, as I need that.

Where do you picture yourself in five or ten years' time? Ideally I would be ruling the world but realistically I would be in America working for Blizzard who make the star craft games. I love that company and have always loved their games. Living in a nice apartment block in LA. I would like a nice car like a hot rod.

To achieve this what might be hard? Well obviously missing family and friends even though I pretend to hate my father and if I was away from mum I would still miss her. I would miss some of my friends as I have known that all my life as we grew up together. I also would miss this place as I know this place like the back of my hand. I would go as I know it would not be permanent as I would come back quite frequently, I would live with my parents when I popped back.

Do you have lots of books at home? Yes lots. We have always had books in our room and when I am bored I still just go and read. My read with us when we were at school and a bedtime. I have never really liked reading I have always been ahead of everyone with reading, I read a lot when I was little but I had a reading age much much higher than everyone else. I think I was reading from the age of two.

Do you have meals together and are these the times when you would talk? We did, not so much now. I would chat to my parents when we all got in from school. But if I come into the living room and dad is watch a documentary I would look at it and think this looks interesting and sit down with dad and we would chat about it afterwards. He likes science so we do tend to have a lot of 'off the wall' conversations over science.

Have you had regular holidays? No they have never been regular. When we were in primary school we did go but never aboard we usually went to the seaside without buckets and spades.

What part have friends played to influence your success? Well up to about year 8 or 9 I was quite a loner then I started to be aware more about my friends they have always been there but not until year 10 have we been a group and now we talk and do things together. We are now quite supportive. I had this attitude that I really did not care and about a lot of things I really did not care but with school I sort of had to. I really had no choice. I would look at the people who genuinely did not care and they were failing. I would think I am not going to do that so I am going to work. This seemed to rub off on them. I did choose to dress differently. I hate the whole conformist thing so this is the other side while still doing the bits to succeed. I think this is the attitude of my dad as he does not care about fads he does what he wants to do and does not care what other people want to do.

Would you say that the way you have been brought up and the success you have had is unusual? Oh yes but I like to be different I go out of my way to be different. Peer pressure has never really been important to me especially now.

Interview with Mrs Billy

What is the make-up of your family? There is my husband and I and the two boys, 20 and 17 years old.

Do you both work? Yes I am a teacher and my husband is a transport planner. He plans out roads and their links.

What is your husband's and your academic background? My husband passed 10 O levels and got three A levels which were D grades. He then went in to work but has done some Open University work and now has about 90 credits. I left school with just five GCSEs which were all Ds,Es,Fs but I did get a distinction in typing.

When you were bringing up your sons were you making education a focal point? I took it very seriously because of the way I was brought up. I have done things very different. I made sure that that they always went to school. I wanted them to go to school, to do their best and they

knew not to get into any trouble. I think they knew how important education was to me as I was studying all the time they were at secondary school.

I changed jobs when the youngest Billy went to secondary as I had concerns and I got a job as a TA.

Why were you so determined to change your job in order to do this for your sons? Other parents may not have done this? I was only working part time before and although TA job is not well paid it was much this what I had been earning, and I had term time working. I was already studying sociology when I started working at the school and this gave me more experience with children who I knew I liked working with. While my eldest was in primary we had paid to get him help and I had really lost faith in the school system. I suppose when I saw the job in the paper I thought there is a job I can go in and see what I can find out to help. I did think that this was a nice job and the youngest was still in primary so this fitted in well with school holidays. My husband worked afternoons and later into the evening and then I worked weekends so we did not see each other and we had done this for a long time. This job was a nice opportunity for us to have more family time.

What about early education? Yes Billy went to nursery at three years old, a few days every week whatever we got paid to send them to. He went to the one attached to the local primary school and then he went to the primary school. Billy only stayed until year 5 as the school started to fall about when the Head teacher left and the new one came and things become difficult. My son was involved in fights and when he could not handle the noise and bad behaviour in class he would just run away and they lost him once and that was the end of it. When he moved he settled well and his SATs results were 5s and he did so much better.

Why did you send your son to this school? You had obviously thought a lot about the move of your younger son? Things got better at the local school from when my older son had started when the new team came so I asked my youngest where he wanted to go. And the new SENCo had come and she was telling me that they had TAs specially trained in ASD. He had his friends here. I felt the place was good for him. He likes the busy big school and I was there and I believed that if he worked hard he would do well.

What do you think have been the key things to why Billy has done well? He has really benefitted from having a supportive team around him, when he was given the statement for ASD this meant he had in class support and this kept him focused. He also has joined the hobbies club which he likes. School has been good for Billy, he tried college this year and it has not worked. He wanted to leave when all his friends were going and they had a wider range of A levels at the college. It has not worked Billy needs the support and structure of the school around him. College was more like a university and it has not worked for him.

So where has your son got the drive from? Billy likes his games, he entered this worldwide competition and out of thousands playing his way through all the rounds he won and got £350. This has given him a real boost. So gaming which probably was fostered through the hobbies club at school.

Where do you see Billy in ten or so years? He will probably be working with a computer company, as a designer of games; he might work in London but could compute.

Do you have books at home? Yes a lot Billy has a bookcase in his room and we have always read with him.

What made you decide to do a degree? I did not know if I was clever or not because I had never really been to school. I never really had done education as I had never had the

opportunity to do it. I had done lots of different jobs and I had been quite good at them and I just thought well may be I can it was like a prove to me that I could do it. I was fed up with doing jobs which just did not pay, support staff in a school I really enjoyed the jobs but felt if I was going to stick around in schools then I needed to be a teacher. So I thought let's take it one bit at a time because you can do it in modules. I am really amazed that I am now a teacher like every day I am still amazed.

When as a family did you have times to talk? Did you have meals together? When the boys were younger we would but not so much now we are just so busy. As a family though I would say we talk all the time.

What about holidays did you take regular holidays and days out as a family? We did take holidays when the boys were young we would go to the beach, always in this country. But when I was studying we did not go as I was needing to work.

Any other comments? I just have always been determined to give the boys a good education and a stable home all the things that I did not have. At the same I did not want to be too controlling I wanted them not to have to worry about things that a child should not have to worry about, just enjoy their childhood.

Interview with Louise

How many brothers and sisters do you have and which number child are you? I have a younger sister who is 14 and attends this school. I am the oldest child in our family.

Do your parents work? Yes both of my parents work.

What work do they do? My dad works for IBM a massive computer company where he is the post graduate manager. My mum works in a school working for the administration of examinations.

Did you parents pass exams at 16, 19 or 21? My dad left school at 14 without any examinations and my mum went on to sixth form to do 'A' levels and left when she was 18.

Do you go to a nursery or a playground? No, nothing like that.

Do you think this had an impact on you when you were growing up. Well yes, I had to learn a lot of stuff when I was at reception to catch up I suppose. But when I was younger I could learn stuff really quickly.

So do you think you missed out by not going to a nursery or play group? Well yes compared to my sister she knew how to even speak French words by the time she started school as she had been to playgroup and nursery.

So you felt you had missed out on a bit of things? Yes.

Why did your parents choose to send you to come to this school? Because of the good reputation that the teachers had at this school, and because some of the courses were modular which meant that you did not have to take all the examinations in one sitting.

Why do you think you have done so well at School? Because...because... my mum always pushes me to do well all the time and also because I have good teachers and I get on with most of them well.

Do you think that the success is all up to your parents and your teachers – what about you yourself? Yes I suppose I was quite determined to do well myself as well but having these folk around has really helped.

So you were determined and motivated to do well? Yes I wanted to pass and to do well.

Why do you think those students who have motivation and want to succeed do well in life? I think that they really want it, if you don't really, really want it then you are not motivated, you have no drive and you will not do what you need to do to do well and to succeed.

Do you as a family have more than 50 books in your house? Yes.

Can you estimate how many you have? Well thousands we have lots of different books and my sister does and both mum and dad do on all different things. There is fiction, non-fiction, fantasy, crime, oh everything.

Did your parents read to you regularly when you were growing up? My dad did yer, not my mum.

Did this have any impact on you as you were growing up? I had good knowledge of words when I was young and this meant that I always had good reading ages.

Do you see your parents reading? Yes I saw my dad, not my mum. My mum she does not really read.

Do you as a family eat together around a table? Breakfast every single morning then at weekends we normally would eat our meals all together.

Is that a good thing? Well yes, depending what mood everyone is in, we normally talk together about all different things. So yes that is quite good.

So is this the time when you can share talks with your parents? No we would normally chat to one another when we are walking the dog, or if when I get home from school I would sit down then and talk about the day and everything.

So you talk as a family at these times not only when you are sitting together at meal times? Yes these would be the main times we talk quite a lot really.

Are there other times when you talk to people? Yes when people come to visit us, and I write quite a lot of letters to a great aunt of mine. I don't get to see her often, it isn't easy to travel to see her. Most of our family are quite wide spread, so we tend to talk via letters or to skipe.

What about at school with teachers? Yes. Do you have honest conversations with them? Yes, yes I can.

What types of holidays have you been on? We normally go aboard once a year, we also go to Newcastle twice a year and then to Exeter and Devon once a year. Going to Newcastle, Exeter and Devon is to visit our family but when we go aboard it is a normal family leisure holiday.

Has one family member been more influential on you then any other? I don't know, my mum has always been very pushy, but my dad has always considered how I feel and stuff. If I am too stressed and stuff, I can talk to him, but mum is just push, push, push.

Do you think this is a good thing? Well no sometimes it gets a bit too much, it is good to be pushed but too much leaves to just too much pressure and this turns into a bad thing.

What impact do you think your friends have had on you and your academic success? My friends have been a bit of both distraction and encouragement. I can sit in the common room for a long time and just talk, but we can also have talks about more intellectual things and work that I am doing, we help each other with homework and if we have a question about our work we are all happy to go and ask a question about it.

It has been a mixture then, do you think is a good thing? Yes you don't want to be studying all the time as this would be too much pressure so yes it is a good thing to have a good balance.

Do you think there have been any particular things that have helped you to do well in school? Moving schools has really helped, at my previous school there was so much pressure as they made us do twice as many GCSEs as any other school and we had to take all the examinations in just one year. This was just so much pressure, it was more relaxed here and lots more support.

What do you wish to do when you leave sixth form? I am not really sure at the moment I am making those decisions now. My choices are to stay on in education and read English and Education at university to be a teacher, or to go and join the Royal Air Force. My parents have a huge influence on this and what I will do but I am undecided at the moment. University would be good and so would the air force. But I am just not sure at the moment.

Where would you go to University? I not totally sure but I like Edinburgh, as I would quite like to go to a university in Scotland, I also like Buckinghamshire University, that one looks good. I think I would like to go to University the more we have heard about it recently and the chance to go and work with the younger children that has been good.

Did your parents go to University? No, no they did not, none of my family has ever been to university.

What influence has this had on you? I don't think they think you really need university, they see it as a great big debt, I would not say they were really university pro, and they are more in favour of you going into a job where you can work your way up.

Do you think they feel this because the fees are so horrendous now at £9K per year? The money is part of the reason, but even if it was just £3K I am not too sure that mum would still feel OK. The reason is partially because of my mum.

When you are earning where would you like to live and what is your ideal house? I think I would stay as I like England, but I also like America. If I lived in England I would probably live somewhere suburban. Just on the outskirts of a town or city. That's because you still have all the resources but you are close enough to the countryside to go out. I maybe would like to move further north.

What would tell you that you had succeeded in later life? That I am happy doing what I am doing in life. Happy with my job. If I am not happy then I will not know that I have not done with my life what I wanted to do.

So for you measuring success is all about happiness? Yes, if I achieve the things that I plan to do this is success but this could chance and this would still be success.

What else could the school have done to ensure you had success? No I wish I had moved to this school earlier. The teachers are really supportive and I think this is definitely important to for creating success with students. It has been so easy to have good communication with the teachers.

Would you say the school or your family has been most influential in your educational success? It has been a mix of both I don't think that one has been more important than the other.

Interview with Mrs Louise

Can you outline your family structure please? I have been married for 24 ½ years, and the two children, one is 17 and the other 14. We adopted the two children, we adopted them together as they are both sisters, one was 4 ½ and the other 23 months. They were in foster care for about a year and left the family home when the oldest was about three years old, the baby was only about 7 months. The oldest has knowledge of her previous family while the youngest does not but does have attachment issues.

Do you both work? Yes I have this temporary admin job in the school and my husband works for a computer company as a manager. He now has to travel to Winchester so he has quite a bit of a journey every day.

What are both of your educational backgrounds? I did O levels and did ok but my husband he left with only one O level. That was in English. But we have picked up other qualifications along the way. We both joined the RAF. I was 16 and he was 17 when we joined up. He joined the armoury on the technical side and learnt the trade there. He did not gain any qualifications through that but he had the experience and the training. Just before he left the RAF he did some extra education and went and did his O level maths at night class and a BTEC in Business. Then when he came out of the RAF he got the job at IBM as a technical author, and he did the course to be a technical author before he left as well so he could get this job. And he really has gone from strength to strength in that job, doing well. He is now a graduate development manager. So if he had not joined the RAF I don't think he would have done all this as he was a grave digger before he joined the RAF.

In both of your parents was there a history of having been educated. In my husband's family I think his dad did. He worked in radio technically world but he died when my husband was just ten. So he did not have him as a role figure. His mum worked in the same factory putting together parts and I don't think she had much education. My mum and dad education did not really feature very much in their lives. My dad left school at 14 went to work in a cinema then joined the RAF at 16 and my mum also joined up and that is how they met. I joined the RAF at 19, I had been to sixth form but only passed domestic science, and I was working in a shop for a year, I think I wanted to go into the RAF but did not really have the guts for it. I had been working at the supermarket since I was 15 and I was fine about doing a few hours but at 19 they started to mess me around with the hours so I thought right that's enough. I went and got an interview date for the RAF and I was in within six months. When I left the job I challenged them because they had not treated me well.

Do you think your drive for making sure you and your husband have improved on your education and skills has influenced the way you have brought up your daughters? Yes although we have not pushed them in any particular way. Our eldest is not sure what she wanted to do we have tried to steer her when she has expressed an interest in something, like she said she wanted to work with children, then expressed an interest in joining the RAF. She is now studying public services, health and social care, and English literature. She has not until recently said anything about going to university, but is thinking about this now, but I think that is the influence of the sixth form as they are all thinking about that now and she is easily lead along. We are a little worried about the RAF direct as is she thinking that she should join up because we did. She chose the courses for sixth form as we thought it would give her a good flavour of the world of work and academic studies and gives her a good spread of choice

in things she had expressed an interest in. we hoped with the BTEC courses that this would give her more doing and she would then suddenly see what she wanted to do, or even to know she definitely did not wish to do that. We are still aware that emotionally she is still behind with her peers due to the trouble she had early on in her life. She does have periods of time when she regresses a bit. She is going through one at the minute and so we know she is going to need a lot more parental support. She worries about things more than her peers would. We know that she does not cope well on her own and we strong influences around her we need to watch out. She is greatly influenced by TV soaps and when she is watching them she just not function. She gets drawn into it so much that so is not any use in doing much else for a little while after. Over the years we have restricted the amount of time that she has spent in front of the telly, so I think we are probably seen as rather strict parents but we are not really. But she does totally switch off when she is watching telly and we cannot get through to her. We have found out that she is watching quite a lot of these programmes on the laptops in the sixth form and her grades have gone down but we have only just been told about this. She has been doing this when she should be studying. Her grades have not gone down that much and that is why we have not been told, but she has missed deadlines and used the excuse that her email is not working. I think that there is a real fear that she would not cope if she was away from us, she would just cut herself off from everything, so she is just not ready yet to be so independent. If she does go to university she will probably do something in Swindon and living at home. We can take it step by step towards greater independency.

In terms of early education years did she attend play groups or nursery? My eldest went to her first play group at the age of three, this was when she went into foster care, and she had not had anything up to this point. It was noted that at three she did not know how to play and had to be shown how to play and join in. All this was new.

The younger one went to a toddler group at 7 months when she went to the foster carer, and then when she came to us, I took nine months off work. I used to work at WH Smith at the time. I took her to toddler groups and then when I went make to work she went to a nursery. I worked school hours and term time only. I paid for all day and sometimes she stayed there so I could take the other one swimming or something. I think they are both bright girls because although one had a better start and has come a long way they both are doing well. Once the oldest was in school she came on so quickly.

Do you know anything about their birth parents? Yes they were both class A drug users. There was some physical abuse as well. That I believe was the final straw as they were both badly beaten. They had been at risk and on the register for quite a while. There had been many years of neglect by the time the oldest was removed. I think it is this neglect that has damaged them as much as they have been.

One of the ideas is that children are born naturally bright but that nurture is more powerful. Would you say it is the nurture for your two that has been most important? I think the oldest learnt how to survive in her early years. She was learning in a very different way than children who were attending nursery and doing things that were age related, she was still learning and fast.

Why did you select for your children to attend this school? The oldest did not start her secondary schooling here but due to poor communication we have had a lot of problems and this is all due to who was teaching them, how open minded they were or understanding. We understand that not all teachers will understand about attachment disorder – we hardly know it all about our two and we are constantly learning. We often felt that staff looked at us as though we were the baddies and as though because the girls were adopted we have done something, rather than we trying to help out and bring them up well. School would make

decisions that we would not want and we would have to tend with the full out. If the girls knew they did not deserve something and still they got it they would just not be able to cope as they would think something was going to happen, as this was what it had been like for them. Some teachers have understood when we felt that they would not cope with a trip and other staff have not and just seen us as very restrictive parents. Parents who are stopping them doing things, and staff have been very rude to us. Teachers started to not tell us things just because she was a teenager. This made it a battle field for us between her, the school and us. She started to feel she was untouchable because the school said she could do things even though they knew we would not like it. In health and social care there was a good example where her therapist had said that she should not use herself as her assessment work, the therapist had said apart from anything if you get a bad mark for it how will you feel about yourself., but the fear was that it would open all this up in an uncontrolled way, so we told the school. But the school let her do it on herself because they said that was what she had wanted to do. It was four months before we found out about this, during this time her behaviour was so strange that we knew something was wrong. One day we were just talking about something about babies and we had said that it would have been nice to have had her since a baby and she said 'oh I have been really stupid, I have done my health and social care assessment on me.' She had been telling us stories that she was doing it on her aunty. When we went to the school to stop it they said no even though her therapist said this would take a good six months to sort out. We were slated badly by the head mistress at that school which she even wrote in a letter to this school. She even wrote a comment about this school not being able to cope with a bright student.

We took the letter as her not wishing to lose one of her top students. Yes we thought that as well.

So concentrating on our eldest what do you think are the key things that have made her perform so well? Our persistence, although I think she wanted to do well at school as well. We here GCSEs we did not get too involved with the homework and the revision, we would talk to her about her work quite a lot. We did find that if we got too involved with the revision it became a fight so we stayed back, we have never really been all that involved with homework.

So you were not getting involved in the homework but she somehow knew that you were encouraging her and were interested? You used the words 'we were persistent' what was it that did not make you give up as many other parents might have done? I think when we decided to adopt we knew it was never going to be easy. The issues with the girls are new to us, we were never told that they were as damaged as they were/are. I think our drive is therefore wanting the very best for them now. We just want to be a 'normal' family. I cannot say the girls have had the happiest of upbringing. They have had to face a lot of challenges and a lot of difficult times. Our good times are only a fraction on the scale of other families' good times. The graduation at GCSE was lovely I was crying before we even got into the hall. When she got that award it was lovely, but afterwards she was just eating and I know that is when she is not coping. So I am really pleased that she had won the humanities award against all the odds and I just want to hug her and that is not what she wants as she does not do hugs and I see her eating lots and know that is how she copes with stress. But that is what she needed to do to keep calm and to cope with all the emotion and she did and was fine.

Do you feel that because you were not able to have the girls that you are more persistent with them? Other families with many children might not act the same way? It has been hard but we just want them to have a family and us to be a family, to have all that they can possibly have. We have got to times when we have thought however, that we could not go on so we have not been so persistent. About a year ago the youngest was having such problems we

needed to have a couple of weeks of care away from the family because we were so afraid that the whole family was close to breaking up. Our social worker did all the paperwork but the following day we were told it could not happen as it had to go to a different team. But they would send out a social worker in seven days to fill in the new paperwork. But I could not wait seven days. We needed help then, so our social worker said would my mum and dad have her so we could have the break. I agreed. She went up there for three weeks and that just gave us the time to calm down to breathe and to plan for the next step. This social worker is great she has foster children so she really knows. Everyone kept saying they are lovely girls no problems but we knew something was brewing and then it happened. If we had not had this social worker we would not be together now.

Do you have more than 50 books in the home? Oh yes many more than that.

Do the girls regularly see you reading so role modelling reading to them? My husband he has a greater love for books than I do, I would just drip in and out of a book. We have a vast number of books in the house. It is always something we have encouraged and both of the girls love to read. When the girls first came to us we would read to them at bedtime every night. We did the reading book with them when it came home from school. They both had reading ages well above their actual age so at that point we just let them read as they wished and did not make them do it with us.

Are their focal points when you as a family talk together, do you eat meals together? We always eat breakfast together and at weekends we would normally eat together. In the last few years we probably don't have chatty meals, because of the teenage years but especially because of our youngest who has had so many issues more recently. The relationship between the two girls is horrendous. But we will all have days out and do things together. We also have the dogs and we go for long walks and sometimes we will chat on these walks. We will watch the news together or listen to the news in the car and this will frequently start up conversations. One of the teachers said about the eldest how nice it was to have a child you had opinions and knew about issues in the world. We also travel as my parents live in the North East and we travel up there where as many of the local children here have not been outside the town. We do try to go to a number of places we have had a holiday aboard, but they chat to me when they want to. The youngest did have a speech problem when she came to us, she would just point but no talking. This had been her survival technique but after a short period of speech therapy she was fine. They said then that she was bright.

Has there been an additional family member who has had an influence on them? Their Dad and my dad who they visit regularly every year. My dad talks to them about all sorts of things around the world. They discuss the news on the lap top and they also discuss his childhood. My mum also as she likes to take them out and they do things together. It is all fairly low key. They don't have computers in their bedrooms. They do have a mobile phone but we have instilled in them that they must work for what they have.

What about the influence of friends on the girls? Their friends, well they don't really have any. Unfortunately. Over the years the oldest has had groups of friends they are normally an odd mixture of people. But she never is one for meeting up with them or bringing them around to the house, we would have to say to her why not bring someone around, or going to the pictures with your friends, she will do this when we suggest it. She has had more friends since she has been at this school. I think they have accepted her more. She has not been picked on at this school which she has been before. When she came here her confidence grew and she got more friends but the friends still stay at school. She has not been influenced by friends she is much more single minded than that.

Do you think she is aware that she has done every well, especially when she got her GCSE results? I think she is aware but she does not really accept it. We have had to really encourage her and help her to accept it. She has had to learn how to show emotions well she has had to learn how to feel. She is battling against her past. She has done so much therapy that she knows the theory of what she is doing. She has written a letter to her birth mother stating what a struggle her life is on a day to day basis. We were given this letter to read and it really gave us an insight as we really did not know any of this and how she felt about her past. I think what is different here at this school is that she is not the only one with issues, the school and the staff are not fazed by any of it. At the other school the staff were more shocked so they would play up to that.

Interview with Sam

Sam how many brothers and sisters do you have and which number child are you? I am an only child; there is mum, dad and myself in my household.

Do your parents work? Yes

What work do they do? My father is a builder and has his own business self-employed, during holidays I generally work for him. My mum works for.

Did you parents pass exams at 16, 19 or 21? They finished school at 16 with a few exams.

Do you go to a nursery or a playground? Yes I went to the local nursery.

Why did your parents choose to send you to come to this school? It was the local school I went to with all my friends from primary school.

Why do you think you have done so well at School? I was in a group of lads who were really competitive, competition has always been important to me especially wining, to me second place is first loser so it has always been stressed to me about winning. Our group were all quite intelligent and driven by ego, and I never wanted to be the one who was not doing something.

What about your friends?

Friends were important, but also seeing those around me of my age and older who were doing nothing with their lives, boys who left our school and did no work, did not get jobs or get boring jobs and all they did was go to the pub and I just knew I did not want to be doing that when I was forty.

Do you as a family have more than 50 books in your house? Yes we have always had a lot of books in the house.

Did your parents read to you regularly when you were growing up? Yes they have always read books to me and I would read with them when I brought my reading books home from school and just loved to read new books on my own. When I came home from school I would do my homework on the dining room table. Mum would be around normally in the kitchen and would encourage me and help me out or check things for me.

Do you see your parents reading? Yes they like to read and I think they have always done so, so this probably was an influence on me and why I like to read so much.

Do you as a family eat together around a table? We have always eaten the evening meal together and at weekends we would eat all meals together around our dining room table.

Are there other times when you talk or do things together as a family? Yes at weekends we have always done things together, dad and I would go to the football together with his mates as well, but as a family we would do something together like bike rides, walks, visiting new towns and places. We like to have meals out together now as well.

What about at school with teachers? I never really felt the staff at my school really cared for me. We never really had much homework. My maths teacher told my parents at a parents' evening that I would get an A grade. But then we had the mock and I only got a U. The teacher did not seem to care for a group of us who struggled with maths. He was a genius at maths the teacher and worked really well with those who were really good at maths. But for those of us working towards the C grade he just gave us exercises to do and we sat together in a corner and worked and then just marked our work from the text book. He worked with all the rest and not with us. But I knew that I needed maths if I was to go to university and so Dad worked with me. He does not have his exam but he uses maths a lot at work and so we would work together through the revision books. If we needed help dad would ask a friend who would explain to dad and then he would help me.

I found school quite boring the lessons up to GCSE were boring and I never really worked very hard. I could do the work as it was easy so we did it quickly and then we could mess around which make the time pass a little quicker.

School set up a gifted and talented club for us and we all went along but apart from doing a few Sudoku puzzles we never did anything so we stopped going. The school was always promising things and then it never seemed to happen. We felt as though they did not really care about us.

What types of holidays have you been on? We have always been on holidays in this country and abroad. We like to do fun activities as well as just resting in the sun, or visiting interesting places. We also go on lots of days out and although mum and dad do lots of activities together without me now I still do join up with them and visit towns and stately homes, fairs etc. we do like to try new things as a family and I think mum and dad have encouraged me to do new things rather than just staying where I am.

When do you first think about going to university?

It was when I started my A levels at the sixth form college, and they have been so encouraging and making sure that we work hard with our A levels to get the top grades to go to good universities.

Where and what do you wish to study at university? I would like to read English and probably at Leicester, Leeds, Sheffield, or Nottingham Trent.

What would you say to sum up are the key reasons for your good progress academically?

Mum and Dad encouraging me. When I worked with dad I realised how hard he has had to work to get the things they have. I want the same in my life, but realise that if I can get a job that pays well that I would like to do I will not have to do the physically hard work for the very long hours like dad has done. I know that I do not want to be like some of the lads that I have gone to the same school as I went to and ended up going nowhere. I want to be in travelling distance to home but I don't like to live and work here anymore.

Interview with Mrs Sam

How many children do you have ages? I have one son.

Do you have a partner? Yes I have a husband and we have been married since we were teenagers. We met at school.

Do you and your partner work? Yes we both work. What jobs do you do? I work as a secretary and also do some accounting. My husband is a builder and he is self-employed and has his own firm.

Did you pass exams at 16, 19, or 21? We left school at 16 with a few examinations but not much, I went back to night classes at a later date so that I could get qualifications in accounting to get on within my job. My husband worked as an apprentice and has learnt his trade that way and has qualifications in building.

Did your son attend a play group or nursery? Yes he went to both, I was keen for him to be ahead of the game and do as well as he could, we saw education as important for him, as it gives you choices.

Why did you choose for your family to attend his secondary school? Because it was the local one and all his friends were going to attend, he would be happy there, he would be able to get to school fairly easily and we quite liked the school, everybody around went there.

Why do you think you have achieved well at school? He had a really good start at primary school especially with one male teacher who was really important to him. This teacher was really sporty and encouraging to the pupils especially to the boys. I think he has really inspired him to do really well at school. He has kept in touch with him and recently did his work experience with him in the primary school. I think he was a really good role model for my son and some of the other boys, it is usual to have a male primary teacher but this was so important to Sam.

When he went into the sixth form there were two English teachers there one, the Head of Year and the other the Deputy Head teacher, these two teachers have really influenced Sam. They did a lot of creative writing and Sam is good at this and they have encouraged him and recognised that he is really good at English and this is the first time since primary school that someone had told him and encouraged him to go to University. They said that he should try for Oxford or Cambridge as he was bright enough but he did not wish to do that, he did not think he would fit in there.

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are? Yes we have loads of books around the house and we all enjoy to read.

Did you read regularly to your child as they were growing up? Yes from a baby we both have read to Sam. WE tried not to have the telly on too much and we read or played games, we really wanted to be good parents.

Do they you see you reading regularly for your own pleasure/work? Yes both of us read a lot for pleasure and especially when we go on holiday now but we also go out on visits and have days out where we read about historically events or whatever we are doing.

Do you eat together as a family around a table? Yes we have always eaten our evening meal together and chatted about the day we have had.

What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday? Yes we have always been on holiday some aboard, we like to spend time together and we walk, and visit

places. Sam does some of the activities now but he does some of his own things now. I believe that it is important for a child to have fun, this is what moulds your children.

Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced your child to do well in school? Yes Rob Hull the primary school teacher and the English teachers. I hope we as parents have influenced him as well. I would not dream to push him into anything. Young people need to live life and to live their dreams not mine. I believe that you can always come back into education but you need to take opportunities and live life now. We never really considered that Sam would go to University so we were not pushing him to go. I think we thought he would finish his A-levels and go on and get a job and earn a living.

What influence did their friends have on their academic success – encouragement to do well, a distraction, give examples? When Sam was in the lower secondary he did what most of the lads did and wanted to hang around the streets. We have been quite firm parents and have not let him do all the same things as those of his same age. His friends have been generally good for him and they have worked well together at school. They have enjoyed sport together.

Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to him at school or home which have helped him to do well in education? Yes as I have said some key teachers but also Sam had to work really hard to get his maths GCSE, as he needed a B grade if he was to do the A levels courses he wanted. He did not work well with his maths teacher so he and his dad worked together every night with the maths to ensure he got it. He had a friend who was really good at maths and his dad would phone him up if they got stuck and his friend would explain how to do it to his dad and then they would work together on it.

What have they wanted to do while growing up as a job/career? Do you think you have had any influence on them? I hope that we have influenced him, I have always wanted him to just have fun and enjoy life and to help to mould him into a nice, kind and caring young man. He has wanted to be a policeman for about the last two years but I am not sure that is still what he wanted to do as he really enjoyed the work experience with Rob in the primary school. I know he is also interested in marketing and selling things.

Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your child's education? I think Sam has been quite driven by an element of competition between his friends. We have always said that competition is a good thing and we never as he was growing up just let him win something, no he and his dad and I would truly have a competition and that is a good thing, and drives us all forward.

Interview with Sue

There are five people in our family, Mum, Dad and three children. I have two sisters, one older and one younger than me.

Both of my parents work locally, my father is the site manager for one of the local secondary schools and my mum is a cleaner. They have always worked in these jobs since I was born, and similar work since leaving school. They left school at 16 without many qualifications. They have lived around here as well, and were educated here also. My family live locally and we are quite close.

I went to the local nursery a few times a week before I then joined reception class. I think it helped me to get to know a few people before I started school, but I don't know if it really helped as it was just playing a few mornings a week for about a year.

My parents choose for me to come to this school as it was the nearest one and they had also been here. All my friends were going to this school as well. We did not attend the information

evenings as we knew the school, my older sister was also attending it when I started so my parents knew everything they needed to know.

I think I have done well at school because I have studied, I worked for it. I had a good relationship with my teachers but I think it was my efforts that made it all happen.

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are?

Yes we do have plenty of books in our house – probably about 200. We have horror books and all the Jodie Picoult books, and Jane Costello as me and my sister love to read these.

Do you see your parents reading? No generally I have always read to myself, when I was very young they read me a bedtime story but very soon I liked to read to myself instead. I think my parents reading to me gave me the desire to read, and imagination and probably I knew more about reading than some of my class mates when I started school.

My mum still reads a great deal, I still see her reading every night. My dad does not really read he does not like reading. Most nights Dad will watch the television while mum reads, he watches the news and then whatever he likes.

Do you eat together as a family around a table? Yes we do, mum insists we eat together in the kitchen at the table and not up in our rooms. It is a good thing as we do get to talk together as a family. We talk about all different things, but especially what has happened in the family and what happened at school.

Are there other times when you have conversation with your family or other adults? I can talk with my parents after 9 O'clock when my grandmother has gone to bed. On Saturday all the family come around to our house and we have supper together and chat. My uncles and aunts and my cousins. So many people to talk to so I have a great opportunity to speak with other adults as well as people of my own age.

What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday?

We try to go out for days when it is the school holidays, we always go to the beach at least once, but we don't ever go on proper type holidays. We like to go to the arcades with my cousins, and go on donkey rides, that sort of thing.

Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced you to do well in school?

I think that would be my cousin, because he is always telling me that I can't do things, not in a playful way, but really quite spiteful and this has made me work harder just to show him that I can and I am just as good, even better than him.

Mum and dad have always encouraged me to do what makes me happy. But I think what has really motivated me has been when I got a really bad grade I wanted to get a better one so worked harder.

My friends share the same wants as I do, we all try to work hard at school. If I have any distractions it is because I create them not my friends. My friends really encourage me and if I don't wish to study they say, 'you don't want that grade' and this then motivates and inspires me to work harder.

What do you expect to do after year 11, year 13?

I am going to stay on and do A-levels and then go to university and do history, and then I want to travel to Germany or to Poland. I want to work in Poland or Germany in one of the concentration camps that is now a museum, and to become a curator. I know I will be away from my family but that does not scare me, it's just what I want to do.

I want to go to a good university but Bath does not do the course I want so it will have to be Bristol or another one in the south west. I really love studying history and especially the German history part of the course. Going to university I know will be hard but it really motivates me to study and to do my best. My friends want to go to university as well but they all want to study dance as I want history. I know that the only way I can go and work in a place like Auschwitz is if I have a good history degree. At first they wanted to go and I did not but when I saw how much I could get out of going I just decided to go.

No one in my family has ever gone to university, my parents often say they wish they had done more, but I will be the first to attend university.

My dream is to be able to live in Germany and have a nice family home, and a car. I will know that I have achieved my dream when I take people on a tour of the concentration camp and a people are able to ask me questions and I will be able to answer them and tell them this type of thing will never happen again. Success to me is being happy with what you have got and knowing that you have done all you got to get it.

I think the school needs to make sure that if students have dreams they really push them to make sure their dreams can happen. I think the school has done right for me but for others they need more help with this and the school needs to help them.

I would say that the school and my friends have had the greatest influence upon me. Giving me a taste of history and a want to study it more and to tell others about what has happened in the past. My friends also have encouraged me a lot to believe that I can do this. My parents are always there and they want for me to be happy.

Interview with Tony

Tony how many brothers and sisters do you have and which number child are you? I have an older sister only.

Do your parents work? Yes

What work do they do? My father is an engineer working for Aimee Railway maintenance, my mum is a manger in a warehouse. Before my dad worked at Honda for 16 years on the factory floor and my mum has always since I can remember worked in the warehouse.

Did you parents pass exams at 16, 19 or 21? They finished school at 16 with a few exams.

Do you go to a nursery or a playground? Yes I went to the local nursery, I am not sure it had much of an impact on me, I made friends, but I was so young.

Why did your parents choose to send you to come to this school? Because my older sister had done quite well here getting her A levels so I followed her. We had a lot of information about the school because my sister was here so we knew it well, the school sent us information out as well.

Why do you think you have done so well at School? Because of the teachers, they have helped me a lot,

What about your friends? There were those who worked and those who did not, but I could work alongside both. We were just friends I don't think they had a great impact on me.

So would you say that it was the strong relationship you had with your teachers that really helped you to succeed? Yes, I was well motivated by them, they showed me what might happen if I did not work, I would be like all my friends who failed to achieve anything and I really did not wish to be like that.

Do you as a family have more than 50 books in your house? Yes most definitely. I estimate we have about 100, they are all different types of books, information type books as well as leisure reading books.

Did your parents read to you regularly when you were growing up? Yes I would read when I brought my reading books home from school like four times a week, I think this really helped me to start reading.

Do you see your parents reading? Yes occasionally like on the ipad, and other things don't really see them reading much these days. They do have both electronic and paper books.

Do you as a family eat together around a table? Not all the time, but generally yes. We can talk about the day over the meal we are quite an open family so talk about anything, what has happened that day and things. I think it is a good thing.

Are there other times when you talk as a family? Yes when we are all downstairs we might talk about things, or when friends come round especially other adults we sit and talk together. We frequently have other family members drop in and we talk together then.

What about at school with teachers? I could but only school related matters would I go and talk to them. I don't speak to them about private matters as I would speak to my parents only about these things.

What types of holidays have you been on? We have had loads, we went to Florida once to the theme parks and we have done a few leisure parks in this country as well as we were growing up. Now days we tend to go to the beach and have a time to relax, I like both. We went on holiday generally once a year in the summer. We have tended to go aboard to get the sunshine, and then just visit family who live in Bournemouth, and we see them more frequently not just at holiday times.

Has one family member been more influential on you then any other? No I would not say that one has both of my parents are successful so I think they both have influenced me. They both have motivated me but probably my dad has more so, because of his engineering work and I would like to do that to, so he has encouraged me a little more in this area.

What impact do you think your friends have had on you and your academic success? Well I have two different groups of friends one group who say do you want to come round to study and the other group who say let's go out, muck about and have fun. I was able to say no to one group if I knew that I had to get the work done I would just not go with the other group and just finish the work either on my own or with my other friends.

Do you think there has been any particular things that have helped you to do well in school? No I don't know really it always seem to have been the same since year 7 to now. I think I put a lot more effort into my work than a lot in our year did, there were others who worked hard and I suppose I followed them a little. I know I worked hard for my GCSEs.

I have liked being part of the engineering course and was particularly keen when I was selected to work with the engineers from Honda. We constructed a large clock made from car parts which is now in the front reception area.

What do you wish to do when you leave sixth form? I want to go and get an engineering apprenticeship or perhaps if not I might go to University. If I went to University I have not thought where but it would be to study engineering. My sister talked about going but she took a year out and then did not wish to go. I am not sure if she regrets that but I did not wish to make the wrong decisions.

When I am earning I will want to still live here as I have lived here all my life, my family is here and there is nothing wrong with it. However, I do think it would also be nice to live aboard for a couple of years. I might like to go to America as I liked it when I went there.

What would tell you that you had succeeded in later life? Well my goal is to be an engineer, but it all depends where I am really by then. It will not matter if I am still in an apprenticeship if I have achieved that, but my dream is to be an engineer. It will not matter to me if it takes five or ten years. I will still be happy with my life even if my dream changes, as long as I have work and can provide for my family and I am happy that would be my success. It will be success but not the fullest of it. I would be very successful if I have the top job and earning a lot of money.

What else could the school have done to ensure you had success? I think in the sixth form they should do more as not everyone wishes to go to university and that seems to be the main focus. There is nothing for those who want to find apprenticeships.

Would you say the school or your family has been most influential in your educational success? Well both but probably the school has had a bigger impact. When I am in an educational place I am like motivated to do work, it is my study place. When I am at home I suppose I am still learning but not as much.

Interview with Scott

Family

How many brothers and sisters do you have? Which number child are you? I am the youngest in our family of four, I have an older sister and mum and dad.

Do your parents work? What jobs do they do? If they don't how long have they been out of work? What job did they do before? Yes both my parents work, mum is a TA at the primary school and dad works for Honda.

Did your parents pass exams at 16, 19, or 21? They both left school at 16, with a few examinations, mum has done her BTEC examination for TAs while she has worked at the school and dad has passed various work based qualifications over the years. Both of my parents did not really like being at school and did not gain a great deal of examinations. They came to this school when it was the old school.

Your education

Did you attend a play group or nursery? Yes I went to the nursery attached to the primary school a few mornings every week.

Why did you and your parents choose for you to attend Headlands/Swindon Academy? My sister already attended the school and all my mates were going to go there. It was near to our home and any other would have been difficult to get to.

Why do you think you have achieved well at school? I have done well since I was selected to go on the Futsal scholarship course in year 9 and then in year 12, as part of the elite group. I had to pass my GCSEs in order to be selected as part of the elite programme and I really wanted to play football and be on this course.

Creating success in education

Do you have more than 50 books in your house? Can you estimate how many you do have and what types of books these are? Yes we have books at home, I don't have many but mum does, we have about 100. Mum has children's books for her work and some of them were ours from when me and my sister were growing up.

Did your parents read regularly to you as you have grown up? Mum read stories to us when we were little. Dad worked shifts so was not home all the same times.

Do you see your parents reading? Mum does when she prepares work stuff, and Dad and I look at football magazines. My sister reads some when she comes home from university.

Do you eat together as a family around a table? No not much, I generally go out of an evening, we do eat together on a Sunday, mum makes sure we have a big lunch that day and we eat together.

If you do is this time a time when you can talk together as a family? A bit, mum and my sister do, but Dad and don't as much.

Are there other times when you have conversation with your family or other adults? I can speak to mum if I need to but I and mates discuss things a lot.

What types of holidays have you had as a family? Do you go on holiday regularly if so where and how many times a year? What types of activities would you do on holiday? We have been to beaches and plenty of days out. Dad and I go to the football, home and away matches and I play for the local team and we travel to away matches together for that as well.

Is there a particular family member who you believe has influenced you to do well in school? My coach at Futsal has been important as he has believed that I could pass that course at year 11 and he worked hard to make sure I finished school and was able to go on. I have also been asked to go on the tournaments and help out regularly. I won the student of the year prize and this made mum and dad really proud and I think my coach voted for me to get it.

What influence did your friends have on your academic success – encourage you to do well, a distraction, give examples. We all were selected to go on the course and this really helped as we could work together, I know they also are mad at times and we have not always made it easy for ourselves in school, but since the scholarship things have changed and we are all off to university or have places with football teams to go to.

Would you say there were any particular things since being in school that have happened to you at school or home which have helped you to do well in education? When I was in year 9 I was nearly expelled and the school said I could go on the course as long as I worked hard and if I did not I would be kicked off. The course was good, and they really did kick people off the course if you did not work hard in school, only eight who started the course out of the 15 finished it after three years because they kicked them off or they were expelled from school.

Your future

What do you expect to do after year 11, year 13? In year 11 I hope that I am selected for one of the Futsal scholarship places as our school has some special ones since we are the host

school. I hope that my mates get on the course as well. After that they talk of getting selected to be part of the football teams in the under 21s or to go on a coaching course at university. I don't mind which I do I just know I want to play football as a career.

If you wish to go to university – where and what to study? My sister has just gone to the local university, she leaves at home and drives in, but if I went to do the coaching course I would live away as it is on the other campus in the city. The course is good and we went with the school to have a look at the campus. The scholarship programme will help to get me in as well.

What has made you decide to go to university? Did your parents go? Have friends or members of your family gone to university? My sister was the first of our family, and friends to go to university. Her friends went with her. She really likes it. But if I want to do coaching in football you need it. The scholarship is designed to make us either join a team or go on to university, they help us to move on to either of these.

When you are earning – where would you like to live – what place? Ideal house? Ideally I would like to be playing football in at least the championship, or coaching at a top level. So I would live the life that goes with that and have a house and car to match. I don't want to live around here, although the local team is a good place to start. We have an international manager currently.

What things would show you that you have achieved success later in life? To be with a premiership team.

What more do you think the school could have done to help you or others to achieve in education? They should have let us go to Futsal all the week and to do our English and maths GCSE there not having to come back to school.

Would you say school or your family have been the most important influence in your education? I suppose the scholarship which school set up has changed things for me, I would not be doing this well if I had not been on the course.

Interview with Luke

What is the make-up of your family? There is mum and I, my half- brother and mum's partner.

Does your mother and her partner work? Yes, mum works in a school; she has done a number of jobs around the administration side of things and Steve works for the council in the transport department.

Where about do you live? Within the school area, on one of the main roads.

What qualifications have your parents? Mum left school with few qualifications and had me when leaving school she has studied hard since I went to school and has achieved A levels and a degree with the open university. Steve left school after A levels and has done some qualifications in his job.

Where you aware of education being important in the family as you were growing up? No not really while I was growing up. Things were really hard for mum and she brought me up on her own, I know she wanted to do things really different to how she was brought up. My granddad was quite supportive of mum and I and then when mum met Steve she got more support.

Why did your mother select this school for you to attend? I came to this school because it was local and we could get here easily. Mum had attended here so knew what it was like, I wanted

to come because my friends were all coming we did look at the others but mum knew I wanted to come here so was happy to give it a go.

Why do you think you have done so well at School? Well I was not doing all that well at first because I found it really hard to read, and then the new SENCo came and mum went to her and spoke about my problems and that she had had me tested outside of school and I had dyslexia but the previous SENCo did nothing about it. She put me on a reading course and I had 1:1 every day and I made 53 months reading age improvement in less than 8 months. Suddenly I could read in class and I became more confident and this made all the difference. I suddenly achieved things it was so good.

What about your friends? Yes there was a small group of us who have stayed together since primary school we have similar interests and work well together. They don't have so much support from their parents who don't see education in the same way as our family. Their parents don't work and just sit around at home and I think this has influenced them a bit.

So would you say that it was the strong relationship you had with your teachers that really helped you to succeed? There has been in the upper school especially with a few teachers in drama and in music, and with the SENCo. The music department have all been really good and encouraged me and my friends to explore our music and to think about a career in music and theatre.

Do you as a family have more than 50 books in your house? Yes we all have bookcases in our bedrooms filled with books. I did not have so many when I was growing up with mum but once we were a family and there was more money we had lots of books. We always went to the library mum and I when I was young.

Did your parents read to you regularly when you were growing up? Yes at bed time we always had books from the library, and then when I went to school mum read with me but I found it really difficult and did not want to read them myself, I did like to look at the pictures or listening to stories.

Do you see your parents reading? Mum tends to read for the studying she is doing, but Steve he likes to read, and to read the newspaper.

Do you as a family eat together around a table? We tend to eat together now at weekends because we are all doing things in the evenings.

Are there other times when you talk as a family? Oh we are always talking especially about things on the news, Steve is good for a great debate on a current issue, we all join in. But if I want to speak to mum about things I just can.

What about at school with teachers? No not really I think I am more likely to talk with mum or Steve.

What types of holidays have you been on? Recently we have not really been on holiday, but we have had lots of days out and we are always doing leisure activities together going to the cinema, bowling or eating out.

Has one family member been more influential on you than any other? Mum has, as she was central to my life at first. But they both have a really good work ethic which I think has rubbed off as I know you have to work hard for what you get. I can see that as mum has worked so hard, and she is so different to her mum's family who just don't work.

What impact do you think your friends have had on you and your academic success? I think my friends have been I have also been influenced by those in my year who have no ambition

and I just know they will be like their brothers and sisters who just do nothing and will be here going to the pub when they are forty and in dead end jobs if in work at all, and I am not going to be like that.

Do you think there have been any particular things that have helped you to do well in school? Learning to read was the break point for me, if that had not happened I would never have known that moment when I did something and I thought wow I can do this and suddenly I wanted some more of it.

What do you wish to do when you leave sixth form? I want to go to university, I know I won't have the very best results but mum and I have looked on the computer and found some courses, foundation degrees in technical music industry and I am keen to do this, there is a local course at the local university where my friends are looking to go as well but there are also some good courses in the north of the country.

What would tell you that you had succeeded in later life? I think having a house and a family and being in a job that I enjoy. I might live locally but I would be happy to leave as long as I could see mum and Steve at times. I would like enough money to provide for my family and enjoy life and have friends around me.

Would you say the school or your family has been most influential in your educational success? Probably my family because had mum not pushed so hard to get my support with my reading then that would not have happened and I would not have achieved as much as I have especially within the sixth form. Mum has also supported me so much with thinking about university. I know she supports my view on life that I take opportunities as they come and that really helps.

Interview with Ms Luke

What is the make-up of your family? There is my partner and I and my two sons.

Do you both work? Yes I am a teaching assistant and my partner works for the local council.

What is your partner's and your academic background? My husband did well in school he passed O levels and A levels, although at low grades. I left school with no qualifications really but went and studied for some since.

When you were bringing up your son were you making education a focal point? Education does mean a lot to me today, and especially for my sons, because of the way I was brought up. Going to school was not key to my family so we frequently were absent. My older sister and I have done reasonable well though and both of us are re-training and looking to get better jobs and careers. My younger step sister has not done well at school and this was hard as she grew up at a similar time to Luke, he would see her getting into trouble and see that my mum was not really doing anything about it. I wanted things different for my sons.

I changed jobs when Luke started school and became a TA. The holiday's suited me but I also felt I could help him out and overcome some of the learning difficulties he had.

What about early education? Luke was able to attend a nursery from the age of 2 ½ years old, I expect that was because I was a teenage mum. He went a few days every week which was paid for so I could start to work and gain some qualifications. He then went on to the local primary which was attached to the nursery and was near to our home. My son did not do the SATs and got B because of his reading. I knew he knew things but learning things was difficult for him, although the school did try to help him out nothing seemed to change until he went to the secondary school.

Luke started a reading scheme, it gave him a real boost and helped him to go and try things and to do better and I think this rubbed off on to his friends. This boost of achievement meant that they believed they could go on and they could go to University, before he achieved he and his friends were just joining the rest and not really doing anything. I don't think that he was ready to rush out into work like the rest of his year at the end of year 11. He did feel the pressure to follow the rest and go out and earn some money but he did not feel ready and it was the closest and easiest thing to do was to go into sixth form. It was a really good idea. He has discovered a real passion for music technology and while in the sixth form has helped in performing arts departments with loads of shows.

Do you think this drive for young people to go out at 16 to get a job is a cultural thing of the estate? Yes it is common, but my partner and I were studying and we made the decision that we would not tell the boys what they had to do. Some parents do tell their children that they need to pay their way or that they must go to university and the children go and do the opposite just because they wish to have the choice. I just want the boys to make the choices and it is to be completely up to them. But we probably were sending messages to them without knowing.

Where do you see the Luke in ten or so years? I think Luke is like me and takes opportunities as they come. I want to push myself as far as I can go but this means I take opportunities as they come up without a single ambition.

Do you have books at home? Yes lots the boys have a bookcase in their rooms and we have always read with them.

Was this the same for you when you were young? We had a few books but not on the scale that we have now. People would buy us books at Christmas. My great grandma used to buy me the Enid Blyton books. From my childhood I am not a great reader, I would like to be, all I do now is my study reading. Steve is completely book mad. He will read a book a week, but he grew up with books where as I did not. I really think I thought it was important to make sure that the boys had books because I did not. For Steve, his education was really pushed when he was young. He lived in London and moved here when he was 15. His family ran the local taxi company. In my family you were encouraged more not to go to school so that the eldest could look after the younger children. My parents were separated and although education was important to my dad he could not really do anything. We lived with my mum and she had told the school that he did not have custody of us so the school would never speak to him or send him our reports. This only came to light recently when I asked him why he had not made us go to school and he said that he had been made to sign this over to mum.

When as a family did you have times to talk? Did you have meals together? When the boys were younger we would be not so much now as it is all a bit mad. As a family though I would say we talk all the time. When Luke was at secondary school we would talk when we first got in. when Steve came in we could do it all again. The three males do still have long conversations I tend not to join in now with them.

What about holidays did you take regular holidays and days out as a family? We did take days out when the boys were young we would go to the beach. In the last few years the boys have not come with us when we have taken holidays. We go out together when they were kids we were members of next generation gym we would also go swimming once or twice a week, they did a number of different clubs in school. Now we would probably go out to dinner we do that quite a bit, any occasion. We do go to the cinema or go bowling together we do quite a bit still together.

Luke wants to go to university what has made him select this? At school they showed them many universities and he has always been interested in the lights and sound technical side of the theatre. Most of his friends have gone to local universities. He did apply locally at first but they all said no so we needed to hunt for a course that would take him, though clearing we found this new course. It has turned out to be a diamond in the rough as it is one of the best in the country for this particular area. We sat at the computer on results day and looked for this course. It was really hard to let him go to university but he wanted to go so we looked. This course said come up and see us so we drove all the way up there and had a look around. He had an interview. It is an amazing place. Some of his mates were going to go to university but they did not go. They have families that play the system and make sure they get as much out of the government as possible they don't drive their children forward. They did not want them to go they wanted them close to home. We have an ethos in the family to have a go.

I had the eldest when I was just seventeen I was really quite young. I lived in a homeless hostel. The guy I was with was really no good so I just decided I was going to do this on my own. I met Steve when Luke was about eighteen months old, it was not really difficult that time as I thought this is my child and I am going to do it right.



Appendix 6: Planning diagram of the factors aiding success against the odds.